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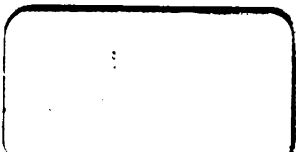
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MEMOIRS
OF THE LATE
WILLIAM COBBETT, ESQ.^R

Memoirs of William
FROM
Private and Confidential Sources.

BY
Robert Lush, F.L.S. & F.R.S.

VOL. I.



"We shall find," said Cobbett, "that the Serpent can sting those who attempt to annoy him".

LONDON

Published for the Proprietors by John Saunders,
25 Newgate Street 1838

MEMOIRS
OF THE LATE
WILLIAM COBBETT, Esq.
M.P. FOR OLDHAM;

EMBRACING
ALL THE INTERESTING EVENTS OF HIS MEMORABLE LIFE,
OBTAINED FROM PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
SOURCES;

ALSO,
A Critical Analysis of his Scientific and Elementary
Writings.

BY ROBERT HUISH, Esq. F.L.A. & Z. Soc.
Author of the Life of the late Henry Hunt, Esq.; Last Voyage of Captain Sir John
Ross, for the Discovery of the North West Passage; Travels of
Lander into the Interior of Africa, &c. &c.

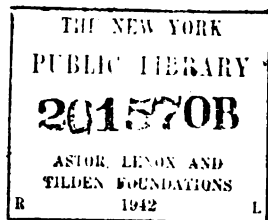
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
Published for the Proprietors, by
JOHN SAUNDERS, 25, NEWGATE STREET.

1836.

M. Sm



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INTRODUCTION.

It is a pleasing task to observe the great and noble efforts of true genius surmount the numerous difficulties, and often dangers that oppose its growth, and likewise to mark the strange vicissitudes and circumstances that interrupt the steady application and firm purpose, which tend to advance it towards maturity and perfection.

Fertile as this country has been in men of the most transcendent talents in every branch of the arts, sciences, and literature; celebrated as it may appear through all the annals of her history, for men who by their genius have promoted the general interests of mankind, there are few, who in a particular department, and taking all the circumstances under consideration in which the individual appeared, who can be put in competition with the late William Cobbett.

The dawn of his life was obscured by the chilling mists of poverty, and the most abject dependence; entering upon that world in which he was destined to act so conspicuous and important a part, wholly destitute of any of those resources by which his advancement in life could be promoted; he was the sole architect of his own fame, and few there are, who will leave such an imperishable monument behind them. With the uncontrollable fire of a splendid genius burning within him, it broke, like the beams of the sun in heaven, through the density of the clouds, which darkened it; it threw its light upon all the nations of the earth, diffusing in its

irresistible course the blessings of useful knowledge, and raising in the breasts of his compatriots a noble opposition to the encroachments of monarchical and aristocratical power. Bursting the bonds in which poverty had bound him, and closing upon him all the resources of the most humble education, he, who had never been taught, became the teacher of thousands of his countrymen; his indefatigable spirit bounded over the obstacles and difficulties, at which the common mind would have turned away despairing and dismayed, and he raised himself at last to a pinnacle of fame, which his enemies have attempted in vain to assail, but which the multitude of his friends will revere and hold sacred, as long as a love of justice and of patriotism vivifies the British breast.

To the rising generation, the study of the extraordinary circumstances which distinguished the life of William Cobbett, will prove of incalculable value, for in them is manifested what an individual, if possessed of perseverance and activity, can achieve, even under the most discouraging and disheartening aspects. They will there read the salutary lesson, that however indigence and necessity may darken the early periods of their life, yet there is no difficulty—no obstacle—no impediment, which cannot be overcome by a determined spirit of perseverance to accomplish the end in view; by the exercise of an undaunted fortitude under the attacks of the malicious and the malevolent, and by an indefatigability, which nobly and proudly meets the obstacles which are thrown in the way of their progress, entering as they must then do into the contest with an unshakeable confidence of success, and thereby establishing their future prosperity through life.

To the patriot, the politician, and the economist, the writings of William Cobbett will ever be considered as an invaluable treasure; the former will see in them the causes

which have tended to the subversion of those sound constitutional principles, which were gained by the blood of our forefathers—the second will derive from them the knowledge of the crooked policy, and disjointed machinery by which the energies of this mighty nation are directed—and the latter, by the practical exposition of the systems to which the author adhered, will find the channels opened to him, by which his own operations may be facilitated, and those difficulties removed, which have hitherto stood in the way of his success.

Cobbett was in a great degree his own biographer, but in the perusal of the multifarious scenes through which he passed, it is no easy task, with the knowledge of his disposition to amplification and exaggeration to distinguish between that which is false and that which is true, and further in default of general information, there is perhaps no source so spurious and suspicious as that which is taken from the description furnished by the individual himself ; the great and leading principle of hearing both sides of a question is thereby extinguished, and were the means in our power of investigating many of the actions which Cobbett describes as having occurred to him during his residence in America, we should perhaps discover that the fault was not always in that quarter where he imputed it, but that in some instances it strictly belonged to himself. In the following work, therefore, we profess to adopt a line of strict impartiality, we will bestow the merit where it is due, but we will not wilfully withhold our censure, where the action deserves it. The mistake of describing the fair side of human nature only, has a direct tendency to contract the mind within a sphere, wherein little exertion will seem requisite to become eminent either in knowledge or virtue.

That the character of Cobbett was a most extraordinary mixture of good and evil, we should be the last to dispute, but

at the same time that we feel disposed to do ample justice to his good qualities, we feel equally disposed to exhibit his bad ones, for we include not ourselves in the number of those pliant, good-natured people, who consider that nothing should be said of the dead, but what is good, for we are decided dissentients to the principle. On the first view, that fictitious tenderness appears to inculcate a spirit of benevolence, and of christian charity, but it is in reality victimizing the interests of the living to a mawkish sensibility for the dead, at all events it never could have been intended to operate as an act of indemnity to cover the deeds of those who have endeavoured to loosen the foundations of morality by their precepts, or to render vice attractive by their examples. The profligacies and debaucheries of a George IV. ought not to be concealed, because he is gone to answer for them at a tribunal, where there is no respect paid to kingly dignity; they will in this world stand forth as a warning to future princes, that they may thereby escape the hatred and indignation of the people, over whom a wayward fortune has destined them to rule. There is an imperative duty imposed upon us, of doing strict justice to all, concerning whom we may be called upon to give the testimony of our knowledge, and of adhering strictly to truth, in what we relate of the conduct of others, whether they be in the habit of speaking for themselves, or are placed beyond the possibility of being affected either by our praise or censure. Were the doctrine otherwise, and did it lay survivors under the immutable obligation of concealing the obliquities of those, who have been removed from this busy stage, where every action of the humblest individual has some connexion with his contemporaries and effect on posterity, history would be no better than romance, by depriving mankind of those lessons for the regulation of life, which are afforded by

the contemplation of human infirmity. To deprive the living of the examples which the dead hold forth, is tantamount to concealing from the pilot the rocks on which his vessel may be wrecked: coloured by the partiality of friendship, and shaded by an excess of liberality, the example even of the most upright men would lose much of their efficacy for the want of being rendered familiar by those peculiar touches of character, which can alone enable the mind to form a correct estimate of those qualities which are the object of admiration.

It would seem then, as if no apology could be necessary for the practice of describing men, as they truly were, when they lived amongst us, and of reporting their actions with impartiality, since in this we do no more than what is recommended by the highest authority. For the purposes of moral edification, this delineation of the human character is essentially necessary, and with the view to the formation of an exact judgment of mankind, it is indispensable. Memoirs written with a studied intention to render the subject pleasing, are like pictures, in which likeness is neglected for the sake of beauty.

The monition of indulgence in speaking of the dead may be good in private life, where the disclosure of infirmities would only serve to sharpen malice and inflame the passions, without any instructive end, but it cannot be admitted in the exercise of that judgment, which we have a right to form and express concerning the character of those persons, who have borne a leading part on the theatre of the world. Then it must be allowed, that if the memoirs of a man are to be noticed at all, they must be related, with a scrupulous regard to truth, though by so doing the fame of the dead should be affected, or the feelings of the survivors hurt by the exposure.

For a few years back, Cobbett's immediate popularity as

a writer has, we think, been on the wane, though this has arisen rather from change of circumstances than failure in the powers of the man of three score and ten. His period of service was passed; his mission was accomplished. The wheel to which he had so strenuously set his shoulder for above thirty years, was, at last, fairly in motion, and thundering and kindling as it rolled on. The sturdy pioneer—he who with pick-axe and shovel had so lustily laid about him—who had sapped and mined, and finally blown up the fortress of corruption, and scattered so many obstacles to the elements—was superseded by the regular *educated* engineers and artillerymen—and this somewhat superciliously. His temper suffered under this imagined neglect, as he naturally considered himself quite as fit to guide as he had been energetic to impel. There was, however, no neutral ground in his vicinage. In this violence lay at once his strength and his weakness. Need we say how greatly the first preponderated.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

WILLIAM COBBETT, Esq.

M. P. FOR OLDHAM.

CHAPTER I.

It was an early opinion of this most extraordinary man, that an honour is reflected on the person who is descended from an illustrious family, but whether an individual so born is an honour to the family, is a question of very different import; at all events, it is far better to be of a humble origin, and to carry through life the reputation of an honest and honourable man, than to be the offspring of royalty or nobility, a bloated form of vice, debauchery, and licentiousness, with not one redeeming virtue to impart a partial brightness to the turpitude of the character. Considered in another point of view, it must be admitted that a greater degree of merit belongs to the individual, who is the founder of the respectability and opulence of his family, than to him, who derives those advantages from his forefathers, himself at the same time, being perhaps the very reverse of what those forefathers were.

In no part of the voluminous writings of William Cobbett, do we find any traces of a disposition to conceal the lowliness of his origin, on the contrary, he frequently alludes to it with apparent feelings of gratification, priding himself of the con-

trast which his elevated condition then exhibited, to that which distinguished his earlier years. In this respect, an extraordinary dissimilarity existed between him and another celebrated character, who was his contemporary, and who at one time were the gemini in the zodiac of the political world. We allude to the late Henry Hunt, esq. who, proud of the antiquity of his family, and particularly of Colonel Hunt, who assisted in conferring the inestimable benefit upon his country, of restoring a vicious and profligate king to the throne, was frequently bantered by Cobbett, on the value of the ancient ramifications of his genealogical tree, comparing his own origin at the time to a fungus, and that of Hunt to a Normandy pippin; it being always the boast of the latter, that the root of his family could be traced as far back as the Norman invasion. In fact it was an intellectual treat of no ordinary kind, to hear the two politicians discussing the question of their origin; the one proud of its lowliness, the other of its antiquity. In their discussions, however, the keen irony and sarcasm, the biting ridicule, which Cobbett could throw over every subject, which excited the acerbity of his disposition, soon drove his antagonist from the field, leaving him "to wear his blushing honours thick upon him."

William Cobbett was the son of a small farmer, residing in the neighbourhood of Farnham, and was born on the 9th March 1766, although he remembered having heard his mother say, that there were but three years and three quarters difference between the age of her eldest and her youngest child. With respect to his ancestors, he went no farther back than his grandfather, having never heard any one speak of any antecedent member of his family. His grandfather was a day labourer, and worked for one farmer from the day of his marriage to that of his death. He died before Cobbett was born, but he often slept beneath the same roof that had sheltered him, and where his widow dwelt for several years after his death. His rustic dwelling is described as a little thatched cottage, with a garden before the door, having but two windows; a damson tree shaded one, and a clump of



THE HOUSE OF BUCKINGHAM IN WHICH SEVERAL OF THE HOUSE OF BUCKINGHAM WERE BORN.

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filberts the other. Here William and his brothers went every Christmas and Whitsuntide to spend a week or two, and torment the poor old woman with their noise and dilapidations. She was accustomed to give them milk and bread for breakfast, an apple pudding for their dinner, and a piece of bread and cheese for supper. Her fire was made of turf, cut from the neighbouring heath, and her evening light was a rush dipped in grease.

In relating these simple annals of the poor, Cobbett himself says, "how much better is it to tell the naked truth, than to descend to such miserable shifts as Dr. Franklin has had recourse to, in order to persuade people that his forefathers were men of wealth and consideration. Not being able to refer his readers to the herald's office for proofs of the same and antiquity of his family, he appeals to the etymology of his name, and points out a passage in an obsolete book, whence he has the conscience to insist upon our concluding, that in the old English language, a Franklin meant a man of good reputation, and of consequence. According to Dr. Johnson, a Franklin was what we now call a gentleman's steward or land-bailiff, a personage one degree above a bum-bailiff, and that is all."

A spacious court they see
Both plain and pleasant to be walked in,
Where them does meet a *franklin* fair and free.

Fairy Queen.

In discussing the claims of his grandfather and Dr. Franklin to the honours of antiquity, or to the possession of talents, the following severe philippic on the character of the latter, is truly indicative of the mind from which it emanated: "Every one will, I hope," says Cobbett, "have the goodness to believe that my grandfather was no philosopher. Indeed he was not. He never made a lightning rod, nor bottled up a single quart of sunshine in the whole course of his life. He was no almanack maker, nor quack, nor chimney doctor, nor soap boiler, nor ambassador, nor printers' devil, neither was

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energy into action, and gradually unfold the real character of the man. On the other hand, Henry Hunt was taken from the plough to be instructed, not only in useful, but ornamental learning; he had the advantage of the society of men of erudition, of classical attainments, and of a deep and perfect knowledge of the great political subjects, which then engrossed the notice of the people, and the attention of the legislature. Henry Hunt was made a politician by education, before he scarcely knew what it meant. William Cobbett became a politician, and no secondary economist by the direct force of his own natural, uninstructed genius. The gigantic powers of his mind were not to be controlled by the depressing circumstances under which he was born, he burst the bonds in which poverty threatened to enchain him for life, and gradually arose to an eminence in the intellectual world, which few have yet attained, and which stamps him as one of the most extraordinary characters of his times.

His religion was that of the church of England, to which he ever remained attached, although, like many other celebrated men in those days, he did not escape being characterized as a deist, because he was proud and bold enough to admire the political principles of Thomas Paine. "As his ancestors," he says, "were never prosecuted for their religious opinions, they never had an opportunity of giving such a singular proof of their faith, as Dr. Franklin's grandfather, when he kept his bible under the lid of a close-stool (what a book case!) If I had been in the place of Dr. Franklin, I never would have related this ridiculous circumstance, especially as it must be construed into a boast of his grandfather having an extraordinary veneration for a book, which it is well known, he himself *durst* not believe in."

As to his early politics, they were like the rest of the country people in England, that is to say, neither he, nor his family knew, nor thought any thing about the matter. The shouts of victory, or the murmurs at a defeat would now and then break in upon their tranquillity for a moment; they certainly heard of a mummerly being now and then performed,

called a *Te Deum*, for what was called a victory, but it never could be made comprehensible to their unsophisticated minds, that God was ever disposed to accept any thanks for the murder of a few thousands of his creatures. A newspaper was never remembered to have been seen in their house, but this privation did not render them less industrious, happy, or free.

After, however, the American war had continued for some time, and the cause and nature of it began to be understood, or rather misunderstood by the lower classes of the people in England, the family of the Cobbetts became a little better acquainted with subjects of this kind. It was well known that the people were as to numbers, nearly equally divided in their opinions concerning that war, and their wishes respecting the result of it. Cobbett's father was a partisan of the Americans, and he used frequently to dispute on the subject with the gardener of a nobleman, who lived near them. This was generally done with good humour, over a pot of their best ale, yet the disputants sometimes grew warm, and gave way to language, that could not fail to attract the attention of the juvenile part of the audience. Their father was, however, generally worsted, without doubt, as he had for his antagonist, a shrewd and sensible old Scotchman, far his superior in political knowledge; nevertheless he pleaded before a partial audience, for the younger Cobbetts, especially William, thought that there was but one wise man in the universe, and that man was their own father. He who pleaded the cause of the Americans, had also an advantage with young minds; for he had only to represent the king's troops as sent to cut the throats of a people, being their friends and relatives, merely because they would not bow their necks to the chains of an unjust and oppressive taxation, and his cause was gained. An appeal to the passions is always sure to succeed with the uninformed.

Men of integrity are generally pretty obstinate in adhering to an opinion once adopted. Whether it were owing to this or to the weakness of the gardener's arguments, cannot now

be decided, but certain it is that he never could make a convert of Mr. Cobbett; he continued an American, and so staunch a one, that he would not have allowed his best friend to drink success to the king's arms at his table. It is not possible to convey a better idea of his obstinacy in this respect, and of the length to which this difference in sentiment was carried in England, than by relating the following instance.

The elder Mr. Cobbett used to take one of his sons with him every year to the great hop fair at Weyhill. The fair is held at old Michaelmas tide, and the journey was, to the individual who accompanied him, as a sort of reward for the labours of the summer. It happened to be William's turn to go thither the very year that Long Island was taken by the British. A great company of hop merchants and farmers were just sitting down to supper as the post arrived, bringing in the extraordinary gazette, which announced the victory. A hop factor from London took the paper, placed his chair upon the table, and began to read it with an audible voice. He was opposed, a dispute ensued and Mr. Cobbett retired, taking his son William by the hand, to another apartment, where they supped with about a dozen others, professing the same sentiments. Here Washington's health and success to the Americans were repeatedly toasted, and this was the first time, as far as William Cobbett could recollect, that he had ever heard the general's name mentioned, and little did he then dream, that he should ever see the man, and still less, that he should hear some of his own countrymen reviling and execrating him.

Let not the reader imagine, says Cobbett, that I wish to assume any merit from this mistaken prejudice of an honoured and beloved parent, whether he was right or wrong is not worth now talking about; that I had no opinion of my own is certain, for had my father been on the other side, I should have been on the other side too, and should have looked upon the company, as I then made a part of it, as malcontents and rebels. I mention these circumstances merely to

show that I was not nursed in the lap of aristocracy, and that I did not imbibe my principles or prejudices from those, who were the advocates of blind submission. If my father had any fault, it was not being submissive enough, and I am much afraid my own acquaintance have but too often discovered the same fault in his son.

Passing over that part of his juvenile life, which was alternately distinguished by labour, cricket matches, attending fairs, and hare hunts, we shall proceed at once to that epoch when an accident happened, that stamped the destiny of his future life, and was the cause of his visiting the United States.

Towards the autumn of 1782, he went to visit a relation, who lived in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth. From the top of Portsdown, he for the first time beheld the sea, and no sooner did he behold it, than he formed the resolution to become a sailor. He never could account for this sudden impulse, but it is perhaps to be ascribed to those secret inspirations of the ardent mind, which scorning a life of tame-ness and monotony, longs to throw itself upon the world, where so many objects present themselves to charm and influence the youthful imagination, by the prospect which they hold out of pleasure, combined with reward and fame. Almost all English boys, says Cobbett, feel the same inclination, it would seem that, like young ducks, instinct leads them to rush on the bosom of the water.

But it was not the sea alone that he saw; the grand fleet were riding at anchor at Spithead; he had heard of the wooden walls of old England, he had formed his idea of a ship and of a fleet; but what he now beheld, so far surpassed whatever he had been able to form a conception of, that he stood lost between astonishment and admiration. He had heard talk of the glorious deeds of our admirals and sailors, of the Spanish armada, and of all those memorable combats, that good and true Englishmen never fail to relate to their children about a hundred times a year. The brave Rodney's victories over our natural enemies the French and Spaniards,

had long been the theme of his praise, and the burden of his song. The sight of the fleet brought all these glorious deeds into his mind, in confused order it is true, but with irresistible force. His heart was inflated with national pride. The sailors were his countrymen, the fleet belonged to his country, and surely he had his part in it and in all its honours; yet those he had not earned, nor in any manner had contributed to it; he therefore took to himself a kind of reproach, for possessing what he had no right to, and resolved to have a just claim by sharing in the hardships and dangers.

He arrived at his uncle's late in the evening, with his mind full of his sea-faring project. Although he had walked thirty miles during the day, and consequently was much fatigued, he slept not a moment. It was no sooner day-light, than he rose and walked down towards the old castle on the beach of Spithead. For a sixpence given to an invalid, he got permission to go on the battlements; there he had a closer view of the fleet, and at every look, his impatience to be on board increased. In short, he went from the castle to Portsmouth, got into a boat, and was in a few minutes on board the Pegasus man of war.

The captain had more compassion, than is generally met with in men of his profession; he represented to the young candidate for naval honours, the toils he must undergo, and the punishment to which the least disobedience or neglect would subject him. He was consequently persuaded to return home, and the captain concluded his advice with telling him, that it was better to be led to the church in a halter to be tied to a girl he did not like, than to be tied to the gangway, or as the sailors term it, to be married to *Miss Roper*. From the conclusion of this wholesome counsel, a strong suspicion came over the mind of Cobbett, that the captain thought he had ran away on account of an illegitimate child. The thought of such an act brought a blush upon the cheek of the aspiring youth, and this perhaps confirmed the captain in the belief, that he had discovered the real cause of the apparent enthusiasm of the youth for a naval life. In vain he at-

tempted to convince Captain Berkeley, that chance alone had led him to the sea; he was ultimately sent on shore, and quitted Portsmouth, but not before he had applied to the Port Admiral Evans, to get his name enrolled amongst those who were destined for the service. He was in some sort obliged to acquaint the admiral with what had passed on board the *Pegasus*, in consequence of which his request was refused, and he happily escaped, sorely against his will, from the most toilsome profession in the world.

There are several singular coincidences in the lives of Cobbett and Hunt; both of them visited Portsmouth when they were about the same age, both formed the resolution of going to sea, and both were defeated in their purpose by the handsome and disinterested conduct of the captains to whom they respectively applied.*

Discomfited in his naval speculation, he returned to the plough, but for the time he was spoiled as a farmer. He had before his Portsmouth adventure, never known any other ambition, than that of surpassing his brothers in the different labours of the field, but now it was quite otherwise; he sighed for a sight of the world; the little island of Britain seemed too small a compass for him. The things in which he had taken the most delight were neglected; the singing of the birds grew insipid, and even the heart-cheering cry of the hounds, after which he formerly used to fly from his work, bound over the fields, and dash through the brakes and coppices, was heard with the most torpid indifference. Still, however, he remained at home till the following spring, when he quitted it, as he then supposed, for ever.

It was on the 6th May 1783, that he, like Don Quixote, sallied forth to seek adventures. He was dressed in his holiday clothes, in order to accompany two or three lasses to Guildford fair. They were to assemble at a house about three miles from the farm, where he was to wait for them; but unfortunately for him, he had to cross the London turn-

* See the Life of Henry Hunt, Esq. published by Saunders of Newgate Street.

pike-road. The stage coach had just turned the summit of a hill, and ran rattling down towards him at a merry rate. The notion of going to London never entered his mind till that very moment, yet the step was completely determined on before the coach came to the spot where he stood. Impelled by a destiny, which in some cases appears to defy all control or opposition, he got up on the coach, and was in London about nine o'clock in the evening.

It was by mere accident that he had money sufficient to defray the expences of the day. Being dressed out for the fair, he had three or four crown and half crown pieces, which he affirms it was not his intention to spend, besides a few shillings and half-pence. This, his little all, which he had been years in amassing, melted away, like snow before the sun, when he found himself in the society of inn-keepers and their waiters. In short, when he arrived at Ludgate-hill, and had paid his fare, he had but about half a crown in his pocket.

By a commencement of that good luck, which had hitherto attended him through all the situations in which fortune had placed him, he was preserved from ruin. A gentleman who was one of the passengers on the stage, fell into conversation with him at dinner, and soon learnt that he was going, he knew not whither, nor on what business. This gentleman was a hop merchant in the borough of Southwark, and upon closer inquiry, it was found that he had often had some trading transactions with his father at Weyhill. The merchant saw the danger in which the indiscreet youth had placed himself, and being a father himself, he felt for those parents, who were likely to be overwhelmed with affliction at the uncertain fate which impended over their son. He took the runaway to his house, despatched a letter to his father, and endeavoured to prevail on him to obey his orders, which were, that he should return home immediately. He, however, rejected this salutary advice, but he palliates his conduct by affirming, that it was the first time he had ever testified any disobedience, and that he repented of his indiscretion during

the remainder of his life. His better genius indeed prompted him to return, but pride stepped in and stifled in his breast those very salutary emotions which were dictated by prudence, and no inconsiderable share of sound common sense. It was not the chastisement nor the resentment of his father that he feared, but he pictured to himself, that were he to return, he would be pointed and sneered at by his former acquaintance as a simpleton and a fool.

Granting that the conduct of young Cobbett was in this instance marked by the grossest indiscretion, yet at the same time, it must be confessed that the behaviour of his father was in no ways characterized by those feelings, which might have been naturally expected to have exhibited themselves towards a son, whom he could not accuse of any flagrant breach of filial obedience until the present occurrence. It was no more after all, than a decided act of juvenile indiscretion, and had he hastened to London and expostulated with his son on the folly of his proceedings, no doubt can be rationally entertained, that they would both have happily returned to Farnham, and the experience which young Cobbett had gained, would have perhaps operated as a preventive to his trying so dangerous an experiment again. Very different, however, was the conduct of his father; he treated the communication of the respectable and truly benevolent hop merchant with a contemptuous silence, and as his son had betaken himself away from his father's roof, without any provocation or rational cause, it was, according to the contracted mind of the illiberal farmer, the best line of policy for him to adopt, to leave that son to fight his way through the world by the force of his own natural abilities. This ungracious treatment on the part of his father, tended not a little to increase that sourness and acerbity of disposition, which was in some degree natural to him, and which is so strikingly evinced in various parts of his writings, when he had to wield his favourite and irresistible weapons of sarcasm and personal invective.

His generous preserver, however, finding that no hope

existed of bringing the offended father to a sense of proper behaviour towards his son, and at the same time perceiving that the obstinacy of his youthful charge was not to be overcome, he began to look out for some employment for him. Considering, however, the rusticity and vulgarity which were so apparent in his general demeanor; for his associates had hitherto been of the most plebeian grade, extending no further than the clodpoles about his father's farm, it became a matter of no little difficulty to find a situation that was suitable for him. The worthy inhabitants of the borough of Southwark have always been celebrated for an attachment to conviviality, and one of their chief places of resort, at which they spend their evenings, is the tavern well known as the Three Tuns. It was the custom of Mr. S——, the individual who had so generously befriended Cobbett, to frequent that tavern; and one evening, amongst others assembled was a linendraper, who, in the course of conversation, asked Mr. S——, if he knew of a steady young man, who could endure the fatigue of standing twelve or fourteen hours behind a counter, and possessing at the same time a suavity of manners calculated for the society of the female sex. The runaway immediately came into the head of Mr. S——, but what was he to say about the suavity of manners? perhaps a more uncouth, unpolished being could scarcely be found at that time than William Cobbett exhibited himself, and certainly, in the opinion of Mr. S——, there was a very great difference between handling a flail or a scythe, and gracefully twirling about a yard measure, or dexterously cutting off a yard of muslin or calico. Although his protégé was still dressed in the rustic costume of the country; short and tight yellow breeches, a fustian jacket, a red plush waistcoat, and a pair of hob-nailed high-lows, well calculated for the perambulation of his father's hop-grounds; although his hair had never yet undergone the torture of the perruquier, but hung perpendicularly down the back part of his head, like the hair of the tail of his father's cart horses, yet, *malgré* all these disadvantages, Mr. S——, ventured to propose his protégé as a

person likely to suit the linendraper, for although he might not at first be conversant in the art of putting on a fictitious smile, and then an affected simper, and uttering a great deal of fulsome nonsense; yet it was to be expected, that as none of these arts are very difficult of acquiring, a little time would see him as perfect as any of the effeminate, who disgrace the character of a man behind the counters of the splendid establishments of Ludgate-hill. Notwithstanding, however, all these circumstances operating to the rejection of our hero in the character of a counter-man, it was determined that Cobbett should wait upon the linendraper on the following morning, for the purpose of having his qualifications tried. The astrologers would decide, that the stars were on that morning not propitiously inclined towards the debutant in the character of a Borough counter-man, for the linendraper no sooner set his eyes upon him than, much to the confusion and embarrassment of Cobbett, he burst out into a loud laugh, nor could his surprise have been greater, if an ourang-outang had presented himself to fill the vacant situation.

"You're lately from the country I perceive, young man," said the linendraper.

"Yes," said Cobbett, "please you, sir, I came up by the coach with Mr. S——, who had been hopping at Weyhill."

"You have been brought up to the farming business, I understand," said the linendraper.

"Yes," said Cobbett, twirling his hat with his fingers, "I've been a farmer all my life."

"And why did you leave it?" asked the linendraper.

"Why that," said Cobbett, "is the very thing I want to know myself—I asked myself that question this very morning at breakfast, but no answer could I get; I begin to think I have got into the wrong furrow."

"You never thought more correctly in your life," said the linendraper, "and if you will take my advice, you will return to the plough and your parents, you'll do no good in London."

"Eh! what?" said Cobbett, rather testily, "why should

not I do as much good for myself in London as other folks have done. I am young and hale : and I rather suspect that your place will not suit me."

"Nor, my young man," said the linendraper, "will you suit the place."

"I thought as much," said Cobbett, "when I entered the shop, and saw what was going on, so your servant to you, sir," and he walked out of the shop, leaving the linendraper, as he pleased, to admire or to blame the natural bluntness of his character.

Defeated in this instance, of obtaining a situation for his protégé, Mr. S—— was preparing an advertisement for the newspaper, when an attorney, an acquaintance of his, called in to see him. The attorney's name was Holland, to whom Mr. S—— related the adventure of the young fugitive farmer, and who was at that time in want, as Cobbett expresses himself, "of an under strapping quill driver." The parties were not long in coming to terms, Mr. Holland did him the honour to take him into his service, and the next day saw him perched upon a great high stool, in an obscure chamber in Gray's Inn Lane, endeavouring to decypher the crabbed draughts of his employer.

If, however, Cobbett considered himself out of his element in a linendraper's shop, he was still more so in an attorney's office ; he could, it is true, write a plain legible hand, but it was by no means a certain consequence, that because his employer could decypher his hand-writing, that he could decypher the pot-hooks and hangers of his employer. He was in fact the most indocile pupil, that ever mounted an attorney's stool. Mr. Holland was a month in teaching him to copy without almost continual assistance, and even then he was but of little use to him, for independently of his writing a snail's pace, his want of knowledge in orthography gave him infinite trouble, so that for the first two months, he was a dead weight upon the hands of his employer. Mr. Holland, however, who appears to have exercised an uncommon degree of patience with his bungling clerk, would perhaps

have not uttered many complaints, had his transgressions been confined merely to his tardiness in writing, or a pretty copious sprinkling of orthographical errors; but ever and anon summonses of supersedeas were served upon him, from some incarcerated defendant in the King's Bench or Fleet, on account of some clerical error, which vitiated the whole of the proceedings; in some instances writs issued in January were made returnable in the preceding Michaelmas term, so that Mr. Holland found that he had a complete Dutchman's life of it, which consists in living continually in a system of national blunders, one of which is, that because Erasmus lived at Rotterdam, the Dutch are the most scientific and philosophical people in Europe.

In time, however, Cobbett began to be useful to his employer, who was pleased to tell him that he was very well satisfied with him, just at the very moment when he began to be extremely dissatisfied with his employer.

We will, however, give Mr. Cobbett's opinion of an attorney's desk, in his own expressive words:—"No part of my life," he says, "has been totally unattended with pleasure, except the eight or nine months I passed in Gray's Inn; the office, for so the dungeon was called where I wrote, was so dark, that on cloudy days we were obliged to burn candles. I worked like a galley slave from five in the morning till eight or nine at night, and sometimes all night long. How many quarrels have I assisted to foment and perpetuate between those poor innocent fellows, John Doe and Richard Roe. How many times, God forgive me! have I set them to assault each other with guns, swords, staves, and pitchforks, and then brought them to answer for their misdeeds before our sovereign lord, the king, seated in his court of Westminster. When I think of the *satds* and *so forths*, and the counts of tautology that I scribbled over; when I think of those sheets of seventy-two words, and those lines two inches apart, my brain turns. Gracious heaven! if I am doomed to be wretched, bury me beneath Iceland snows, and let me feed on blubber; stretch me under the burning line and deny

me thy propitious dews, nay, if it be thy will, suffocate me with the infected and pestilential air of a democratic club-room—but save me, whatever you do, save me from the desk of an attorney!!

In a letter, which he wrote to one of his brothers at this time, he says, “I am in an earthly hell, if you feel that you have any roguery in you, and have a disposition to exercise it to its full extent, put yourself at the top of a coach, as I did, and make the best of your way to London. I could point out to you many places where you can practise roguery in perfection, but stop no where, get into an attorney’s office as soon as you can, and you will have plenty of scope for your abilities. You may have now and then something to do with *wit*, but it is only writing Surrey to wit, or Middlesex to wit. If you think that you have any tenderness of conscience about you, for God’s sake, leave it behind you, it is of no use at all to you in an attorney’s office; and try as much as you can to obliterate from your mind all the fusty antiquated notions about the responsibility of an oath, it a the most easy and convenient method of getting over is difficulty or a mistake, for perjury is not the only dirty place which attorneys wade through to obtain their unhallowed gains.”

Mr. Holland, it appears, was but little in the chambers himself, whilst his sedulous and attentive clerk was left to be provided for by the laundress. This dame, it is believed, was the oldest and ugliest of the officious sisterhood, and there was no other qualification required than the latter, to render her an object of hatred to the clerk, her companion. She had age and experience enough to be lady abbess of all the nuns in all the convents of the most bigoted of the Roman Catholic cities. It would be an insult to the witch of Endor to compare her to this hag, who was the only creature that deigned to enter into conversation with the lonely clerk. With the exception of the name, he was a complete prisoner, and this weird sister was his keeper. The chambers were to him what the subterranean cavern was to Gil Blas; his descrip-

tion of the Dame Leonarda exactly suiting the laundress of Gray's Inn, as was the profession or rather the practice of their masters.

The forced association with this weird sister imparted a moroseness and bitterness to the general conduct of the clerk, which in a certain degree corresponded with that of the hag towards him, by which some correct estimate may be formed of the happiness he enjoyed as a menial of the law. He had long panted for an opportunity of privately reimbursing her for all the annoyance which she had occasioned him, and it at length arrived. The old woman, by dint of economy and parsimony, had contrived to amass a considerable sum of money, and instigated by the recommendation of a person, in whom she placed the most implicit confidence, she was induced, for a tempting douceur, to lend twenty pounds on the acceptance of an individual, who was represented to be a man of undoubted respectability and integrity. The bill became due, when it was dishonoured; and who was so proper to sue the defaulter as Mr. Holland, her master? Accordingly Cobbett and his amiable associate were sent to the Temple to swear the affidavit of debt; the writ was sealed, and entrusted to Cobbett to deliver into the hands of the sheriff's officer for execution. A few renewals of the writ owing to *non est inventus*, Cobbett thought could not be injurious to the interests of his master, whatever they might be to the finances of his client, and therefore he privately put the debtor upon his guard, who, taking up his abode in the county of Surrey, evaded the execution of the process. Ever and anon, however, an anonymous letter, written by a most sincere friend, reached the hands of the heart-broken laundress, apprising her where her debtor was certainly to be found. At one time it was in the vicinity of the gravel pits of Kensington, and at another, it was at a house particularly and circumstantially described as standing in the fields at Hoxton. Thither of course was Cobbett sent with the officer, but all to no purpose; such an individual as was wanted, might certainly have been there, but now, no information could be

given of him. In the mean time the bill of costs was increasing in length, and the laundress's hopes decreasing of ever capturing her debtor. Term after term ensued, alias upon alias was very regularly issued; term fee and letters of thirteen and four-pence closed the account of every term, and vexation and chagrin at last closed the term of the natural life of the laundress, to the great joy and delight of the mischievous clerk.

In the mean time he never quitted his gloomy recess in Gray's Inn, with the exception of a Sunday, when he usually took a walk to St. James' Park, to feast his eyes with the sight of trees, the grass, and the water. During one of those walks he happened to cast his look on an advertisement inviting all loyal young men, who had an inclination to gain riches and glory, to repair to a certain rendezvous, where they might enter his majesty's marine service, and have the peculiar happiness and honour of being enrolled in the Chatham division. He was not so ignorant as to be the dupe of this morsel of military bombast, but a change was what he now wanted; besides, he knew that marines went to sea, and his desire to be on that element had rather increased, than diminished by his being cooped up in London. In short, he resolved to join that glorious corps; and to avoid all possibility of being discovered by his friends, he went to Chatham, and enlisted, as he thought, into the marines, but the following morning, he found himself before a captain of a marching regiment. There was no retreating, he had taken the shilling to drink his majesty's health, and his further bounty was ready for his reception.

When he informed the captain, who was an Irishman, and afterwards an excellent friend to him, that he thought he had enlisted in the marines, "By Jasus," my lad, "and faith have you not had a narrow escape of it." The captain then told him, that the regiment into which he had enlisted, was one of the oldest and boldest in the whole army, and that it was at that moment serving in that fine, flourishing, and plentiful country Nova Scotia. He dwelt long on the beau-

ies and riches of this terrestrial paradise, and dismissed the new recruit perfectly enchanted with the prospect of a voyage thither.

It is evident from the circumstance of Cobbett having enlisted as a private soldier, that he possessed but a very limited, if any knowledge at all of his real character. To a high uncontrollable spirit like his, there could not perhaps be any thing more galling and humiliating than the drilling of a recruit, until he is declared by his drill master to be perfect as a human machine, and to take his station in the ranks to be commanded by beardless youths, and the proud and pampered scions of nobility. At the period of his enlistment, he may be said to have been of that age, in which, scarcely a single principle of the real character of the individual is developed, and it generally happens, that when a youth departs from a business or profession which is obnoxious to him, he is not very particular in the choice which he makes of a future one, supposing that any change must be for the better, however revolting it may afterwards turn out to the innate feelings of his nature. Cobbett was always a strenuous advocate for the acquisition of the difficult art of self-government, but in what manner that could be attained, when at the same time the individual was under the strictest of all disciplines, namely, the military, is one of those paradoxes, which will be frequently exhibited in the delineation of his extraordinary character. Of all men, no one was perhaps less adapted to succumb to the rigour of military discipline, than the subject of these memoirs, and no wonder need be excited at his soon imbibing a distate for his profession, and seeking for one more suitable to the independent spirit which was now beginning to manifest itself in him, and which would grant him an opportunity of following those pursuits, which were more congenial to his taste.

It was in the early part of the year 1784, that Cobbett enlisted in the army, and as peace had then taken place, no great haste was made to send recruits off to their respective regiments, consequently he remained upwards of a year at

Chatham, during which time he was employed in learning his exercise, and taking his turn in the duty of the garrison. His leisure time, which was a considerable portion of the twenty-four hours, was spent, not in the dissipations common to a soldier's life, but in reading and study. In the course of the year that he remained at Chatham, he learnt more, than he had ever done before. He subscribed to a circulating library at Brompton, the greatest part of the books in which were read over more than once. The library it is true, was not very considerable, nor in his reading was he directed by any degree of taste or choice. Novels, plays, history and poetry, all were read, and nearly with the same avidity.

No doubt can be entertained that the mind of Cobbett was strongly imbued with a desire of knowledge, and his frequent trips to the library at Brompton, were corroborative of his anxious desire to improve and enlarge his mind by reading; but there was a magnet, which attracted him to Brompton, which had no relation whatever, individually speaking, with either literature or learning. It was not to be supposed that he could be guided by his own judgment in the choice of the books, which he was to carry back with him to Chatham, and therefore it was very natural that he should solicit information from others, whose situation or abilities might justly entitle them to impart it. At the age in which he then was, there existed no inconsiderable portion of romantic enthusiasm in all his actions, and the novels, which he was in the habit of reading, by no means tended to abate it, or to keep it under proper control. Every novel, he found, had its hero and its heroine: the former sometimes born and brought up in the lowest station of society, but who was always so fortunate as to enchain the affections of some opulent heiress, the denouement of which always terminated in their marriage. Cobbett began to contemplate his own standing in society; it was true he was nothing more than the son of a humble farmer, and then in the possession of the miserable pittance of a common soldier. He saw, however, in the latter cir-

circumstance, no decided obstacle to his becoming 'the hero of a novel *taken from life*. On the contrary, there was something in it, which fed the flame of his romantic enthusiasm ; and the only difficulty, that presented itself was, where to meet with the heroine. To select one from his own grade in life, would not be at all consistent with the rules and regulations as laid down by the majority of novel writers, and therefore it was necessary for him to look out for one in a station above him ; and as to the question of a mutual attachment arising between them, it was so settled in his mind as a matter of course, that to doubt of it would have been the infliction of a severe wound upon his self-love, and a positive degradation of his personal accomplishments.

The librarian of Brompton had a daughter, by no means deficient in beauty, and she was employed by her father in the general affairs of his business, but she was generally to be seen superintending the department of the library, and it was always from her fair hands, that Cobbett received the literary treasures, which he was to carry back with him to Brompton. By her choice and judgment was he guided as to the comparative excellence of the respective works, and as she once recommended to him the *Soldier Boy*, written by Mr. Pratt, the romantic idea shot into his brain, that it was done purposely in reference to his own condition, and that, like all other females, she must have some secret and positive reason for her actions, and especially for that one, in selecting that book in particular for his perusal. The name of the heroine of the tale was Isabella, and Cobbett had decided, it in his own mind, that he should find the name of the fair daughter of the librarian to be Isabella also, and should that fortunately turn out to be the case, it was a settled point with him, that she was destined by the fates to be the heroine of his eventful life. These bright and glowing visions so teemed and whirled in his brain that, to use his own words, sleep he could get none, for thinking of his Isabella. The momentous point now at issue was, by what stratagemical manœuvre he could obtain the knowledge of the fair libra-

rian's name. Many plans were projected, but all in their turn discarded to make way for another more preposterous than its predecessor; at last, chance bestowed upon him what his ingenuity could not obtain. Being one day in the shop at Brompton, the supposed heroine of his life was busily employed in adjusting the books of her library, when a hoarse and unmusical voice was heard issuing from an adjoining room, exclaiming, "Mary!" The appeal was immediately answered by the supposed Isabella, and Cobbett taking up his books, walked deliberately out of the shop; here was one of the bubbles of his romantic imagination cruelly burst, but still he did not relinquish the object which he had in view. He was, or fancied that he was, deeply in love, and from some particular looks and glances, which were at times shot from the fine black eye of Mary, he vainly flattered himself that he had made some impression upon her heart, and as to the disparity in their conditions, or the difficulties under which he laboured, as a common soldier, destined for exportation like a bale of merchandize, they were obstacles of too trifling a nature to be worthy of his consideration, for what were they in comparison to the obstacles surmounted by other heroes, of whom he was daily reading, and which eventually led them to the attainment of their object. Although one bubble had burst, others were in a state of high inflation in his brain, when on a sudden they all burst simultaneously, with a crash sufficient to derange any brain, even that of a Cobbett, which is not saying a little, and all this disaster was occasioned by two small printed lines, inserted at the bottom of one of the columns of a newspaper, announcing the celebration of the nuptials of Mary, the daughter of the librarian of Brompton, with Mr. Townly, a stationer of Aldersgate-street, London.

Cobbett now determined, and in which he eventually succeeded, to forget Mary, and to apply himself more closely if possible, to his literary studies. He, however, found that the course of reading which he pursued, could not be attended with any great advantage to him; it was merely skimming

the superficies of every thing, without ever penetrating to the nucleus of it, or in his own words, he found himself to be an ignorant smatterer, but no proficient. One branch of learning, however, he studied fundamentally, and that the most essential branch of it, the grammar of his mother tongue. He had experienced the want of the knowledge of grammar, during his stay with Mr. Holland, but it is most probable that he never would have thought of encountering the study of it, had not accident placed him under a man, whose friendship extended beyond his interest. From his practice in the office of Mr. Holland, he had gradually learnt to write a fair legible hand, and this circumstance procured him the honour of being copyist to Colonel Debieg, the commandant of the garrison. He transcribed the whole of the famous correspondence between that officer and the Duke of Richmond, which terminated in the good and gallant colonel being stripped of the reward bestowed on him for his long and meritorious services.

Being totally ignorant of the rules of grammar, and it should also be added, in the construction of sentences, he necessarily made many mistakes, and for these errors, Cobbett adduces the reason, although very erroneously, that no one can copy letter by letter, nor even word for word. The colonel perceived his deficiency, and strongly recommended study, enforcing his advice with a sort of injunction, and with a promise of reward in case of success.

He now procured a Lowth's grammar, and applied himself to the study of it with unceasing assiduity, and not without some profit, for although it was a considerable time before he fully comprehended all that he read, yet still he read and studied with such unremitting attention, that at last, he says, he could write *without falling into any very gross errors*. The pains he took were indescribable. He wrote the whole grammar out two or three times; he got it by heart; he repeated it every morning and evening, and he imposed on himself the task of saying it all over once, every time that he mounted guard. To this exercise of his memory

he ascribed the retentiveness of which he since found it capable, and to the success with which it was attended he attributed the perseverance, which led to the acquirement of the learning which he possessed.

It would be here premature to enter upon any disquisition of the principles on which Cobbett compiled his grammar of the English tongue, and dissenting as we do from many of them, their analysis would in this place very improperly and injudiciously interrupt the thread of the narrative. We cannot, however, refrain from here making the observation, that although Cobbett might compile a grammar as a guide to others, he very frequently himself broke the rules as laid down by him, and which cannot be palliated on the plea of carelessness or negligence. He also says that, whilst at Chatham, he could write without falling into any gross errors. Now, the life of himself, under the title of the *Life and Adventures of Peter Porcupine*, was written twelve years afterwards, during which time it might have been supposed that he had matured his style, and preserved it pure from those errors and inaccuracies, which are so manifest, that they would disgrace a schoolboy on the sixth form at Eton. Thus he, in his *Life and Adventures*, invariably uses the word “to *learn*,” instead of that “to *teach*.” Page 13, we read, “the old woman did not succeed in *learning* me my letters.” Again page 22, “He was a month in *learning* me to copy.” We shall, however, defer making any further remarks on this subject, until we come to discuss the truth and validity of the rules on which he has compiled his English grammar. To return to the narrative.

The study to which Cobbett applied himself, was attended with one great advantage, that it kept him out of mischief. He was always sober, and regular in his attendance, and not being a clumsy fellow, he met with none of those reproofs which disgust so many young men in the service.

But did he not receive some severe reproofs from another quarter, and whence of all places or persons they should not have come? Had he no parents nor relatives living, who

had watched over and nurtured him in his infant years, and who, from natural feelings, could not but be anxious for his fate? It is true, that he felt himself slighted and maltreated by his father, on account of his not paying, as the fugitive thought he ought to have done, the most prompt and obsequious attention to the communication of the worthy hop-merchant of the Borough; but then, who was the original offender? He could not adduce a single instance of harsh or severe treatment from the individual, whom he characterized as his honoured and beloved parent; but in every part of his own memoirs, a studied silence is preserved touching the condition to which he must have reduced an affectionate parent, by his sudden and inexplicable departure from home, nor did he seem to feel the slightest compunctions or remorse of conscience, for the affliction which he must have caused his parents and his relatives. He was studying grammar, when he ought to have studied how far he could heal the wounds, which his conduct had inflicted on the hearts of his parents. We publicly profess not to flatter any man, much less the dead, for the sake of the living; as an impartial biographer, we hold up the character of a man as he exhibited himself on the stage of the world; we deck him not out in borrowed plumes, the application of which would be a gross dereliction from the line of our duty, in the first place, and in the second, a direct culpable infraction of the sacred principles of truth. With the fullest disposition to award to the subject of these memoirs, all the merit and honour to which his extraordinary talents entitle him, we cannot at the same time wilfully shut our eyes to his moral defects. It has been said by a very able writer, in exposition of the character of William Cobbett, and which in many respects does honour to the head and heart from which it emanated: "that men of limited powers may be, and commonly are also men of limited defect." Presuming not to put our knowledge of the character of man in the abstract, in the scale with that of the writer of the article alluded to,*

* See the Standard of June 19th.

we cannot but express our dissent, not only to the opinions expressed in the sentence above quoted, but also to the corollary drawn from it. It is not perhaps exactly here the place to discuss the question of the direction which Cobbett gave to the efforts of his genius. It is certain that moral and intellectual grandeur are by no means co-existent in the same person; on the contrary, it frequently appears that the one is so eclipsed by the other, that no vestige of it is to be seen; but we deny the principles of the proposition, that men of limited powers are also men of limited defect. The limits of a man's moral excellence or defect, are no true and just criteria of his real character, and much less of his capability for crime; for it cannot have escaped the observation and experience of the talented writer in the *Standard*; that men of very limited powers indeed, have been guilty of the most atrocious crimes, in fact, we are rather disposed to view the question in an inverse ratio, and to assert that men of limited powers, so far from being limited in their defects, are in general distinguished by a greater display of them. And in regard to the corollary, that the constitution of mind, from which extraordinary vigour arises, has an original tendency to error, it is at once dangerous and untrue. An individual, therefore, according to this doctrine, has only to be possessed of a certain constitution of mind, from which extraordinary vigour displays itself, to make him more prone to error, than those of his fellow men who happen to be gifted with a less powerful constitution. It is no palliative for the defects and faults of Cobbett, that because he was possessed of a certain constitution of mind, they are to be considered as the natural consequences of it; on the contrary, it is that very extraordinary vigour, which arose from his mental constitution, which ought to have deterred him from the commission of many acts, which appear as lasting blemishes upon his character.

We have been inadvertently led into this digressive matter by a decided spirit of impartiality, not to extenuate nor set down aught in malice, nor on the other hand, wilfully to shut

our eyes to those defects, which stand forth prominently in the character of the individual, whose memoirs we are now writing. Filial love, piety, and obedience constitute a portion of the most beautiful and commendable virtues of the human heart; in fact, they may serve as the criteria and the guide to judge of the existence of others equally amiable in the same breast; by the same parity of reasoning, where those virtues are wanting, we are not to expect others of an equally estimable nature. With the same morbid indifference with which Cobbett mounted the coach to convey him from his parents and his home, reckless of the anguish, which lacerates the bosom of a parent at the uncertainty which hangs over the fate of a beloved child, did he receive during his stay at Chatham, the different communications from his family, urging him to abandon his foolish and reprehensible projects, and promising him forgiveness and a total oblivion of all his past conduct. In one of these communications the afflicted father tells him, that the last rick in his yard, and the last pocket of hops in his loft, should be disposed of, to purchase for him his discharge from the army, and that he would immediately hasten to town and lodge the requisite sum for the procuration of a substitute. To all these appeals of an affectionate parent, not the slightest attention was bestowed. His grammar and his duty appeared to absorb all his thoughts, and by his conduct it might have been conjectured that he had not a parent nor a relative in the world, whom he deemed worthy of a moment's consideration.

Our opinions are said to change with our years, and perhaps no more forcible instance of the truth of that axiom can be produced than in some of the opinions of Cobbett. Thus, whilst he was a soldier at Chatham, he affirms, "that there is no situation where merit is so sure to meet with reward as in a well-disciplined army; those who command, are obliged to reward it for their own ease and comfort." We unhesitatingly confess, that the information contained in the above passage, comes upon us with all the air of novelty, and we are certain that we could point to a hundred individuals, who

on their application at the Horse Guards, could affirm in the most unequivocal manner that Cobbett when he sent forth that information to the world, must have been labouring under no very ordinary degree of delusion. It is quite new and startling to us that merit has any thing to do with promotion in the army, and we can so far speak personally and practically on the subject, that if our promotion in the army had been made to depend on our merit as a soldier, it scarcely amounts to a question, whether we should have got higher than an ensigncy during the whole of our military career. We should indeed entertain more cheering hopes, if the information of Cobbett could be verified in any of our civil or military departments, for there merit is too frequently trampled under foot and discarded altogether, to make way for the numerous pampered foolish minions of aristocratic influence. However, Cobbett appears in one instance as a solitary exception, for he attributes his promotion to the rank of corporal, entirely to his own merit, and there is every reason to believe it was the actual cause; in fact, the following description of his life as a soldier, forms not only a singular contrast with the general conduct of a soldier, but it will show that his promotion was, in reality, in a great degree owing to his merit. On speaking of the great benefit of early rising, in his advice to young men, he says, "Trifling as this matter (early rising) appears upon naming it, it is in fact, one of the greatest concerns of life; and for my part I can truly say, that I owe more of my great labours to my strict adherence to the precepts that I have here given you, than to all the natural abilities with which I have been endowed; for these, whatever may have been their amount, would have been of comparatively little use, even aided by great sobriety and abstinence, if I had not in early life contracted the blessed habit of husbanding well my time. To this, more than to any other thing, I owed my very extraordinary promotion in the army. I was *always ready*: if I had to mount guard at *ten*, I was ready at *nine*, never did any man or any thing wait for me one moment. Being at an age under twenty years, raised from corporal

to serjeant-major at once, over the heads of thirty serjeants, I naturally should have been an object of envy and hatred, but this habit of early rising and of rigid adherence to the precepts now inculcated, really subdued those passions, because every one felt that what I did, he had never done and never could do. Before my promotion, a clerk was wanted to make out the morning report of the regiment. I rendered the clerk unnecessary, and long before any other man was dressed for the parade, my work for the morning was all done, and I myself was on the parade walking in fine weather perhaps for an hour. My custom was thus, to get up in summer at daylight, and in winter at four o'clock, shave, dress, even to the putting on my sword belt over my shoulder, and having my sword lying on the table before me, ready to hang by my side. Then I ate a bit of cheese or pork and bread. Then I prepared my report, which was filled up as fast as the companies brought me in the materials. After this I had an hour or two to read before the time came for any duty out of doors, unless when the regiment or part of it went out to exercise in the morning, when this was the case, and the matter left to me, I always had it on the ground in such time, that the bayonets glittered in the rising sun, a sight which gave me delight, of which I often think, but which in vain I should endeavour to describe. If the officers were to go out, eight or ten o'clock was the hour, sweating the men in the heat of the day, breaking in upon the time of cooking their dinner, putting all things out of order, and every body out of humour. When I was the commander, the men had a long day of leisure before them, they could ramble into the town or into the woods, go to get raspberries, to catch birds, to catch fish, or to pursue any other recreation, and such of them as chose, and were qualified were allowed to work at their trades. So that here arising solely from the early habits of one young man, were pleasant and happy days given to hundreds."

As promotion now began to dawn upon him, on his advancement to the rank of corporal he grew impatient to get

to his regiment, where he expected soon to bask in the rays of royal favour. The happy day of departure at length came, and after a short and pleasant passage, they arrived at Halifax in Nova Scotia. The vivid imagination of Cobbett had pictured to him the shores of America as exhibiting all the beauties and grandeur of nature; he anticipated the sight of a smiling, fruitful country, the fields with their golden harvests, the orchards with their blushing fruit; in fact, his fancy had depicted a garden of Eden on the rugged and inhospitable shores of Northern America. His visions, however, of paradisiacal beauty were soon dissolved; and all the glowing representations, which had been made to him by the captain of the company to which he belonged, of the charming and delightful country to which they were about to steer their course, were soon obliterated by the more forcible impressions of reality. So wrapt, however, was he for a time in the delusions of his fancy, that when he first beheld the barren, not to call them hideous rocks at the entrance of the harbour, so fondly did he cling to his original ideas, that he expressed his fears that the master of the vessel had mistaken his course. Not a vestige, however, of that fertility and beauty was to be seen, which his eloquent recruiting captain had dwelt on with so much delight. Nova Scotia had in fact no other charm for him than that of novelty. Every thing indeed which he saw was new; but instead of smiling fields and blushing orchards, he saw hogs, rocks, and stumps, mosquitoes, ants, and bullfrogs. If he directed his views to animal life, he beheld hundreds of captains and colonels without soldiers, and in some instances soldiers without colonels or captains; he saw esquires like the Scottish lasses, without stockings and shoes, or if they had shoes they had no stockings, and if they had stockings they had no shoes. In some respects he found himself in the land of equality, for although in his fatherland, he never would have thought of approaching so great a personage as an esquire, without a most respectful bow, yet matters appeared in the new world to be very differently constituted; for

although he was but a corporal, he often ordered a squire to bring him a glass of grog, or even to take care of his knapsack.

The darling project of his mind, however, during his stay with the army, and which appeared to be the *ultima Thule* of all his wishes, was the attainment of the knowledge of, grammar. It was his opinion, that without understanding grammar, no man can ever hope to become fit for any thing beyond mere trade and agriculture. "It is true," says Cobbett, "that we do, God knows, but too often see men have great wealth, high titles, and boundless power heaped upon them, who can hardly write ten lines together correctly; but remember it is not *merit that has been the cause of the advancement*, the cause has been, in almost every such case, the subserviency of the party to the will of some government, and the baseness of some nation who have *(has)* quietly submitted to be governed by brazen fools. Rely you upon your *merit*, and upon nothing else."

It would appear from the foregoing passage, that Mr. Cobbett entertained an opposite opinion respecting the effect and power of merit, as bearing upon advancement in a military, or in a civil department. We have seen him promulgating the opinion, that merit is sure to meet with reward, if the individual happen fortunately to belong to a well disciplined army, but that in the general affairs of life, it is a commodity, which is of no use to you in promoting your advancement. The cases might be very satisfactorily reversed: A man relying, solely relying for his advancement in the army, unaided by interest or influence, will be a subaltern all his days, but in civil life it is the man of merit who forges his way despite of all obstacles, to the goal which he has in view. Depending on his own resources, without the assistance of patronage, he pursues his course steadily and boldly; and although for a time, his merit may be neglected and overlooked, it will eventually break forth, like the sun from behind a cloud, and he is then in possession of the proudest satisfac-

tion which a man can enjoy, which is, that he has been the only and sole architect of his fame.

Thus Cobbett continues his strictures on the value of the knowledge of grammar:—"Without a knowledge of grammar," he says, "it is impossible to write correctly, and it is by mere accident if the person speaks correctly, and it should be remembered that all well-informed persons judge of a man's mind by his writing and speaking. The labour necessary to acquire this knowledge, is indeed not trifling. Grammar is not like arithmetic, a science consisting of several distinct departments, some of which may be dispensed with; it is a whole, and the whole must be learned or no part is learned. The subject is abstruse; it demands much reflection and patience, but when once the task is performed, it is performed *for life*, and in every day of that life it will be found to be, in a greater or less degree, a source of pleasure or of profit, or of both together. And what is the labour? It consists of no bodily exertion, it exposes the student to no cold, no hunger, no suffering of any sort. *The study need subtract from the hours of no business (?)* nor indeed from the hours of necessary exercise; the hours usually spent in the tea and coffee slops, and in the mere gossip which accompany them, those wasted hours of only *one year*, employed in the study of English grammar, would make a correct speaker and writer for the rest of his life."

The following exquisite morceau, descriptive of the discouraging circumstances under which he applied himself to the attainment of the knowledge of English grammar, is told in such a style of originality and graphic humour, that whilst we admire the Spartan simplicity of the man, we cannot withhold an equal share of admiration from the writer.

"I learned grammar," says Cobbett, "when I was a private soldier, on the pay of sixpence a day. The edge of my berth, or that of the guard bed was my seat to study on; my knapsack was my bookcase; a bit of board lying on my lap, was my writing table, and the task did not demand any thing like a year of my life. I had no money to purchase candle

or oil; in winter time it was rarely that I could get any evening light but that of the fire, and only my *turn*, even of that. And if I, under such circumstances, and without parent or friend to advise or encourage me, accomplished the undertaking, what excuse can there be for any youth, however poor, however pressed with business, or however circumstanced as to room or other conveniences. To buy a pen or a sheet of paper I was compelled to forego some portion of food, though in a state of half starvation; I had no moment of time that I could call my own; and I had to read and write amidst the talking, laughing, singing, whistling, and brawling of at least half a score of the most thoughtless of men, and that too in their hours of freedom from all control. Think not lightly of the farthing, that I had to give now and then for ink, pen, and paper. That farthing, alas! was a *great* sum to me. I was as tall as I am now; I had great health and great exercise. The whole of the money not expended for us at market, was *two pence* a week for each man. I remember, and well I may, that upon one occasion I, after all absolutely necessary expences, had on Friday made shift to have a halfpenny in reserve, which I had destined for the purchase of a red herring in the morning; but when I pulled off my clothes at night, so hungry then as scarcely to be able to endure life, I found that *I had lost my half-penny*. I buried my head under the miserable sheet and rug, and cried like a child!! And again I say, if I, under circumstances like those, could encounter and overcome this task, is there, can there be in the whole world a youth to find an excuse for the nonperformance? What youth, who shall read this, will not be ashamed to say that he is not able to find time and opportunity for this most essential of all the branches of book-learning."

It is not, however, in the mere instruction for the attainment of the knowledge of grammar, that the genius of Cobbett so powerfully displays itself. Every passage is a valuable apothegm, bearing upon some practical point of human life,

and an adherence to which cannot fail to elevate the character, and render it more able to fulfil the duties which may be imposed upon it. Thus, in pursuing his exposition of the advantages arising from the knowledge of grammar, he says :

“ How many false pretenders to erudition have I exposed to shame merely by my knowledge of grammar. How many of the insolent and ignorant great and powerful have I pulled down, and made little and despicable. And with what ease have I conveyed upon numerous important subjects, information and instruction to millions now alive, and provided a store of both for millions yet unborn. As to the course to be pursued in this great undertaking, it is, first to read the grammar from the first word to the last (rather dry reading) very attentively *several times over* ; then *to copy the whole of it* very correctly and neatly, and then to study the chapters one by one. And what does (*do !*) this reading and writing require as to time ? Both together not more than the tea slops and their gossips for three months. There are about three hundred pages in my English grammar, four of those little pages in a day, which is a mere trifle of work, do the thing in three months. Two hours a day are quite sufficient for the purpose, and these may, in any town that I have ever known, or in any village, be taken from that part of the morning, during which the main part of the people are in bed. I do not like the evening candle-light work, it wears the eyes much more than the same sort of light in the morning, because then the faculties are in vigour, and wholly unexhausted. But for this purpose there is sufficient of that daylight, which is usually wasted, usually gossiped or lounged away, or spent in some other manner productive of no pleasure, and generally producing pain in the end. It is very becoming in all persons, particularly in the young, to be civil and even polite ; but it becomes neither young nor old to have an everlasting simper on their faces, and their bodies sawing in an everlasting bow ; and how many youths have I seen, who, if they had spent in the learning of grammar, a tenth part of the

time that they have consumed in earning merited contempt for their affected gentility, would have laid the foundation of sincere respect towards them for the whole of their lives."

Valuable, indeed, are the remarks which he makes on acquiring a habit of perseverance in all the undertakings of life, and he frequently shows that he was indebted to that eminent virtue, for all the great works which he accomplished, and particularly for his knowledge of grammar. Notwithstanding all the disheartening and discouraging circumstances by which he was surrounded, during the time that he was a soldier, his spirit of inflexible perseverance was not to be broken. True, indeed, is his remark, wherein he says, *That men fail much oftener from want of perseverance, than from want of talent and of good disposition; as the race was not to the hare, but to the tortoise, so the meed of success in study is to him who is not in haste, but to him who proceeds with a steady and even step. It is not to a want of taste, or of desire, or of disposition to learn, that we have to ascribe the rareness of good scholars, so much as to the want of patient perseverance. Grammar is a branch of knowledge, like all other things of high value, it is of difficult acquirement; the study is dry, the subject is intricate, it engages not the passions, and if the great end be not kept constantly in view; if you lose, for a moment, sight of the ample reward, indifference begins, that is followed by weariness, and disgust and despair close the book. To guard against this result, be not in haste; keep steadily on, and when you find weariness approaching, rouse yourself, and remember that if you give up, all that you have done has been done in vain. This is a matter of great moment, for out of every ten who undertake this task, there are, perhaps, nine who abandon it in despair, and this, too, merely for the want of resolution to overcome the first approaches of weariness. The most effectual means of security against this mortifying result, is, to lay down a rule to write or to read a certain fixed quantity every day, Sunday excepted. Our minds are not always in the same state, they have not at all times the same elasticity, to-day we are full*

of hope on the very same grounds, which, to-morrow, afford us no hope at all ; every human being is liable to these flows and ebbs of the mind, but if reason interfere and bid you overcome the fits of lassitude, and almost mechanically to go on without the stimulus of hope, the buoyant fit speedily returns, you congratulate yourself that you did not yield to the temptation to abandon your pursuit, and you proceed with more vigour than ever. Five or six triumphs over temptation to indolence, or despair, lay the foundation of certain success, and, what is still of more importance, fix you in the habit of perseverance."

Cobbett considers grammar the most important of all the branches of book-learning, for he says, " it gives you, when you possess it thoroughly, a real and practical superiority over the far greater part of men. How often did I experience this, even long before I became what is called an author. The adjutant, under whom it was my duty to act when I was serjeant major, was, as almost all military officers are or at least *were*, a very illiterate man, perceiving that every sentence of mine was in the same form and manner as sentences in print, he became shy of letting me see pieces of *his* writing. The writing of orders and other things therefore fell to me, and thus, though no nominal addition was made to my pay, and no nominal addition to my authority, I acquired the latter as effectually as if a law had been passed to confer it upon me. In short, I owe to this branch of knowledge every thing that has enabled me to do so many things, that very few other men have done, and that now give me a degree of influence, such as is possessed by few others, in the most weighty concerns of the country. The possession of this branch of knowledge raises you in your own esteem, gives just confidence in yourself, and prevents you from being the willing slave of the rich and titled part of the community. It enables you to discover that riches and titles do not confer merit ; you think comparatively little of them, and as far as relates to you, at any rate, their insolence is innoxious."

Disposed as we may be to award to Cobbett all the merit that so justly belongs to him, we cannot refrain from remarking, that in the last passage quoted, he attaches a far greater value and importance to the knowledge of grammar, than what really belongs to it. It is undoubted that the possession of any branch of knowledge raises you in your own esteem, and it imparts a confidence to you, which will be frequently found to be of essential service in the various relations and vocations of life; but we are obliged to confess our ignorance of the power possessed by the knowledge of grammar, of preventing an individual being the willing slave of the rich and titled part of the community. In fact, as very few of that class have any thing to do with that knowledge, so that knowledge has very little to do with them. The two things have in fact no relationship to each other. It never yet formed the criterion of admissibility to any office whatever, nor did it ever protect an individual from being trampled upon by the legitimates of the aristocracy, or the illegitimates of royalty. According to the authority now adverted to, it is most probable that if Sir Felix Booth had studied Lowth's grammar as Cobbett had done, he would not have advanced nearly twenty thousand pounds to enable a man to render himself more ridiculous than he was previously; if Sellis had been as good a grammarian as Cobbett was, the knowledge would undoubtedly have so operated upon him, as to deter him from concealing himself in a closet, to be afterwards murdered; and we cannot refrain from expressing our surprise, that if the knowledge of grammar is of such potency as described by Cobbett, it did not at certain times exert its influence over him, and protect him from being the slave not exactly to the rich and titled part of the community, but to persons of a more dangerous stamp and character. We also profess our ignorance in being able to discover by what talismanic power grammar enables us to discover that riches and titles do not confer merit; we required no grammar to teach us that; for let us direct our eyes whithersoever we will, we find that so far from merit attending titles and riches,

they are like oil and water, always in a state of separation; there is no such thing as bringing them into any positive state of amalgamation; and we are positive that it was not the extraordinary proficiency of Cobbett in grammar, which forced on him the conviction, that one ounce of the influence of the lords of the treasury is of greater value towards obtaining an individual titles and riches, than if his merit were equal to the weight of the monument, which the folly and stupidity of the English people have erected to the memory of that virtuous, moral, and honourable member of the blood royal of England, the late duke of York.

We mean not to question the truth of some portion of the remarks, which are contained in the foregoing pages on the value of grammar, although it is perhaps the last study to which any other common soldier but Cobbett, would have applied himself; but the whole may perhaps be brought into one climax, Cobbett was the author of an English grammar, and although not exactly published on his own account, yet he derived a considerable profit from the sale of it.

CHAPTER II.

THE regiment to which Cobbett belonged, staid but a few weeks in Nova Scotia, being ordered to St. John's in the province of New Brunswick. Here and at other places in the same province they remained till the month of September 1791, when the regiment was relieved and sent home.

They landed at Portsmouth on the third of November, and on the 19th of the following month, he obtained his discharge after having served not quite eight years, and after having in that short space passed through every rank from that of a private sentinel to that of serjeant major, without ever being once disgraced, confined, or even reprimanded.

This statement, however, does not speak loudly for the corroboration of Mr. Cobbett's statement respecting the existence of merit in procuring advancement in the army; for after a service of eight years, distinguished by the most meritorious conduct, we find him only a serjeant major, and that post gained without stopping at the intermediate one of serjeant, he having been appointed serjeant major from a corporal, over the heads of thirty serjeants. Thus he had only two promotions, but that we must admit is something, being gained without money or interest, which is a rare thing indeed in the professional departments of this country.

It is, however, necessary to give the documents in full, corroborative of his excellent conduct as a soldier, in order to invalidate certain reports, which were promulgated not only in America but in England, that William Cobbett, *alias* Peter Porcupine, had been flogged in his regiment for thieving and afterwards for deserting.

The following is the copy of his discharge:—

By the Right Honourable Major, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, commanding his Majesty's 54th Regiment of foot, whereof Lieutenant General Frederick is commander.

"These are to certify, that the bearer hereof William Cobbett, serjeant major in the aforesaid regiment, has served honestly and faithfully for the space of eight years, nearly seven of which he has been a non-commissioned officer, and of that time he has been serjeant major to the regiment, but having very earnestly applied for his discharge, he, in consideration of his good behaviour, and the services he has rendered his regiment, is hereby discharged.

Given under my hand and the seal of the regiment, at Portsmouth, this 19th day of December 1791.

EDWARD FITZGERALD."

The following were the orders issued at Portsmouth, on the day of his discharge :—

"Portsmouth, 19th December 1791."

"Serjeant Major Cobbett having most pressingly applied for his discharge, at Major Lord Edward Fitzgerald's request, General Frederick has ordered Major Lord Edward Fitzgerald to return the serjeant major thanks for his behaviour and conduct during the time of his being in the regiment, and Major Lord Edward adds his most hearty thanks to those of the general."

On the arrival of Cobbett in his native land, it might have been supposed that the long dormant flame of filial affection would have revived in his bosom, and that his first steps would have been directed to the home of his parents, we, however, cannot discover any traces of his ever having visited Farnham, but on his arrival he immediately bent his course to the metropolis, not seeming to care whether he had a father or brother alive.

During his residence in London, an infamous faction, as he styles them, asserted that he got his living by garret scribbling, and that he was obliged to take a French leave from France for some night work. Now the fact, as related by himself, is, that he went to France in March 1792, and he landed at New York in the month of October following, so that he had but three months to follow "garret scribbling" in France. In what manner those three months were passed he does not deem it necessary to state, but he appeals to the ladies to decide whether he had much leisure for "garret scribbling," when during that time he was employed in obtaining for himself a wife.

Of the birth, parentage, or even name of this lady, Cobbett is very scanty in his information, but it is only Cobbett himself, who could relate the particulars of his first acquaintance with her, in all that simple and expressive style which was so peculiarly his own. It is, however, perhaps fortunate for the spinsters, that every one does not look for such a combination of properties and excellencies in a wife, as William Cobbett did, and which in reality he fancied that he had found. "The qualities desirable in a wife," he says, "are chastity, sobriety, industry, frugality, cleanliness, knowledge of domestic affairs, good temper, and lastly—beauty." The lessons which he inculcates on these eminent virtues are in themselves, a code of moral law, and carry with them an incalculable value to all whom they may concern. Of chastity, he says, "a loose woman is a disagreeable acquaintance, what must she be then as a wife. Love is so blind, and vanity is so busy in persuading us that our own qualities will be sufficient to ensure fidelity, that we are very apt to think, or at any rate very little, of trifling symptoms of levity; but if such symptoms show themselves now, we may be well assured that we shall never possess the power of effecting a cure. If prudery means false modesty, it is to be despised, but if it means modesty pushed to the utmost extent, I confess that I like it. Your free and hearty girls I have liked very well to talk and laugh with, but never for one moment

did it enter into my mind that I could have endured a *free and hearty girl* for my wife. The thing, I repeat, is to last for life, it is to be a counterbalance for troubles and misfortunes, and it must therefore be perfect, or it had better not be at all. When a peer of the realm, who had not been over fortunate in his matrimonial affairs, was urging Major Cartwright to seek for nothing more than *moderate* reform, the major, forgetting the domestic circumstances of his lordship, asked him how he should like *moderate* chastity in a wife? Yet with this moderate chastity, you must be and ought to be content, if you have entered into marriage with one, in whom you have even discovered the slightest approach towards lewdness, either in deeds, words, or looks. To marry has been your own act, you have made the contract for your own gratification, you knew the character of the other party, moderate chastity is all that you have contracted for, you have it, and therefore you have no reason to complain. I have, however, frequently made the observation, that when families are rendered unhappy from the existence of moderate chastity, the fault, first or last, has been in the man, ninety times out of a hundred."

Of sobriety, he says, "by that term I do not mean merely an absence of drinking to a state of intoxication, for if that be hateful in a man, what must it be in a woman. There is a Latin proverb which says, that wine, that is to say intoxication, brings forth truth. Whatever it may do in this way in men, in women it is sure, unless prevented by age or salutary ugliness, to produce a moderate, and a very moderate portion of chastity. There never was a drunken woman, a woman who loved strong drink, who was chaste, if the opportunity of being the contrary presented itself to her. Wine! *only a glass or two after dinner* or so! *as soon as* (?) have married a girl whom I had thought liable to be persuaded to drink habitually; "why a glass or two of wine at dinner or so," as soon as (?) have married such a girl, I would have taken a strumpet from the streets. And it has not required age to give me this way of thinking, it has

always been rooted in my mind from the moment that I began to think the girls prettier than posts. There are few things so disgusting as a guzzling woman; a gormandizing one is bad enough, but one who tips off the liquor with an appetite and exclaims *good! good!* by a smack of her lips, is fit for nothing but a brothel. Yet in this metropolis, it is the general custom for tradesmen, journeymen, and even labourers to have regularly on their tables the big brewer's poison twice in every day, and at the rate of not less than a pot to a person, women as well as men, as the allowance for the day. A pot of poison a day, at five pence the pot, amounts to *seven pounds and two shillings* in the year. Man and wife suck down in this way *fourteen pounds four shillings* a year. Is it any wonder that they are clad in rags, that they are skin and bone, and that their children are covered with filth?

"But by the word sobriety in a young woman, I mean a great deal more than even a rigid abstinence from that love of drink, which I am not to suppose, and which I do not believe to exist any thing like generally amongst the young women of this country. I mean a great deal more than this, I mean sobriety of conduct. Now this species of sobriety is a great qualification in the person you mean to make your wife. Skipping, capering, romping, rattling girls are very amusing when all costs and other consequences are out of the question; but while you have no certainty of this, you have a presumptive argument on the other side. But if I could not have found a young woman (and I am sure I never should have married an old one) who I was not sure possessed all the qualities expressed by the word sobriety, I should have remained a bachelor to the end of that life, which, in that case, would, I am satisfied, have terminated without my having performed a thousandth part of those labours, which have been, and are, in spite of all political prejudice, the wonder of all who have seen or heard of them."

It is not the least valuable part of these strictures, that frequent opportunities present themselves, in which are exhi-

bited some striking tracts of the moral character of the author, and which otherwise would perhaps have never appeared to enable his biographer to complete, in some of its most essential points, the individual representation of the man. Thus, when speaking of the benefits of sobriety, a light is thrown upon a particular part of his character, which, passing over his usual egoistical and adulatory remarks upon himself, expose to us what can be accomplished by a rigid adherence to abstinence.

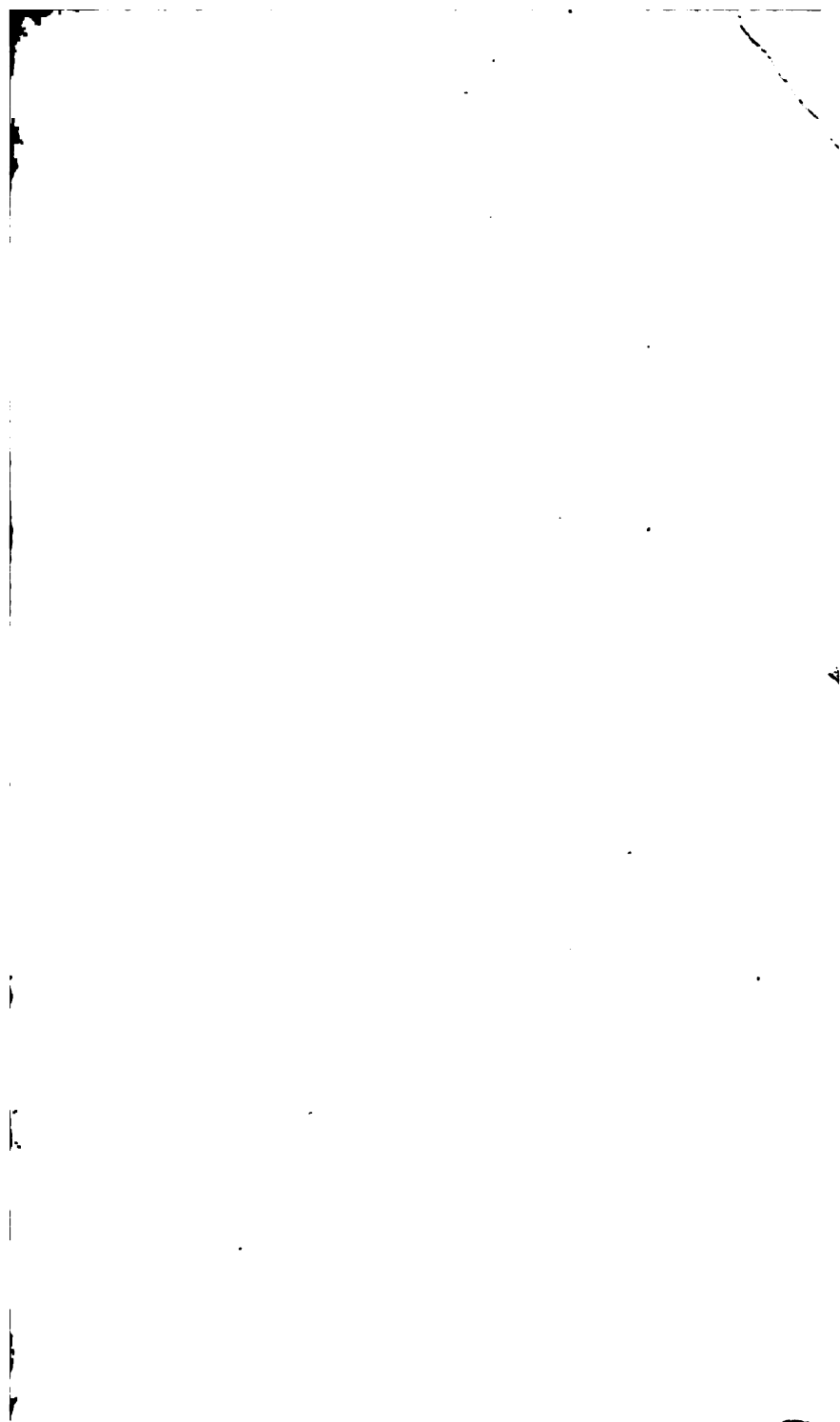
“Scores of gentlemen,” says he, “have at different times expressed to me their surprise that I was *always in spirits*, that nothing *pulled me down*; and the truth is, that throughout nearly forty years of troubles, losses, and crosses, assailed all the while by more numerous and powerful enemies, than ever man had before to contend with, and performing at the same time, labours greater than man ever before performed; all these labours requiring mental exertion, and some of them mental exertion of the highest order; the truth is, that throughout this long term of troubles and of labours, I have never known a single hour of *real anxiety*; the troubles have been no troubles to me; I have not known what *lowness of spirits* meant; have been more gay and felt less care than any bachelor that ever lived.” “You are always in spirits, Cobbett!” “To be sure, for why should I not? Poverty I have always set at defiance, and I could thereby defy the temptations of riches; and as to home and children, I had taken care to provide myself with an inexhaustible stock of that sobriety, which I am so strongly recommending others to provide themselves with; or if they cannot do that, to deliberate long before they embark on the life-enduring matrimonial voyage. Miserable is the husband who, when he crosses the threshold of his house, carries with him doubts and fears, and suspicions. I do not mean suspicions of the fidelity of his wife, but of her care, frugality, attention to his interests, and to the health and morals of his children. Miserable is the man, who cannot leave *all unlocked*, and who is not quite sure, quite certain that all is as safe as if grasped

in his own hand. He is the happy husband, who can go away at a moment's warning, leaving his house and his family with as little anxiety as he quits an inn; not more fearing to find, on his return, any thing wrong, than he would fear a discontinuance of the rising and setting of the sun; and if, as in my case, leaving books and papers all lying about at sixes and sevens, finding them arranged in proper order, and the room, during the lucky interval, freed from the effects of his and his ploughman's or gardener's dirty shoes. Such a man has no real cares, such a man has no troubles, and this is the sort of life that I have led. I have had all the numerous and indescribable delights of home and children, and at the same time all the bachelor's freedom from domestic cares; and to this cause far more than to any other, my readers owe those labours, which I never could have performed, if even the slightest degree of want of confidence at home had ever once entered into my mind."

The following, we fear, will not gain for Cobbett an accession of admirers amongst the female sex, but let them peruse it seriously and attentively, and they will after all thank the man who has given them such salutary advice, although with some little exposure of their foibles.

"Let it not be imagined," he says, "that great sobriety of conduct must be approaching to gloom; according to my experience and observation, the contrary should be the case, for I have found, that is, amongst men, your jovial companions are, except over the bottle, the dullest and most insipid of souls. So amongst women, the gay, rattling, and laughing are, unless some party of pleasure, or something out of domestic life is going on, generally in the dumps and blue devils. Some *stimulus* is always craved after by this description of women; some sight to be seen, something to see and hear, other than what is to be found at home, which, as it affords no incitement, nothing to raise and keep up the spirits, is looked upon merely as a place to be at for want of a better, merely a place for eating and drinking and the like, merely a biding place, whence to sally in search of enjoy-

ments. A greater curse than a wife of this description, it would be somewhat difficult to find. Lord Byron says, 'I hate a dumpty woman,' and I say, I hate a dull, melancholy, moping thing; I could not have existed in the same house with such a thing for a single month. The mopers too are all gigglers at other times; the gaiety is for others, and the moping for the husband, to comfort him, happy man, when he is alone; plenty of smiles and badinage for others, and for him to participate with others, but the moping is reserved exclusively for him. One hour she is capering about as if rehearsing a jig, and the next sighing to the motion of a lazy needle, or weeping over a novel, and this is called *sentiment*. Music indeed! give me a mother singing to her clean, fat, and rosy baby, and making the house ring with her extravagant and hyperbolical encomiums of it. That is the music which is the food of love, and not the formal pedantic noises, an affectation of skill, which is now a days the ruin of half the young couples in the middle ranks of life. Observe the labourer's cottage on a Sunday, the husband or wife having a baby in arms, looking at two or three elder ones playing between the flower borders, going from the wicket to the door; this is, according to my taste, the most interesting object which eyes ever beheld, and it is an object to be beheld in no country upon earth but England. In France, a labourer's cottage means a shed with a dung heap before the door, and it means much about the same in America. In riding once about five years ago, from Portsmouth to Horsham on a Sunday, in the afternoon I came to a solitary cottage, which stood about twenty yards distance from the road. There was the wife with the baby in her arms, the husband teaching another child to walk, while *four* more were at play before them. I stopped and looked at them for some time, and then turning my horse, rode up to the wicket, getting into talk by asking the distance to Horsham. I found that the man worked chiefly in the woods, and that he was doing pretty well. The wife was then only twenty-two, and the man only twenty-five. She was a pretty woman even for





MR. COBBETT RELIEVING THE INDUSTRIOUS LABOURER.

1840

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Sussex, which, not excepting Lancashire, contains the prettiest women in England. He was a very fine and stout young man; Why said I, how many children do you reckon to have at last? I do not care how many, said the man, God never sends mouths without sending meat. Did you ever hear said I, of one parson Malthus? No sir. Why if he were to hear of your works, he would be outrageous, for he wants an act of parliament to prevent poor people from marrying young, and from having such lots of children. Oh! the brute, exclaimed the wife, while the husband laughed, thinking I was joking. I asked the man, whether he had ever had relief from the parish, and upon his answering in the negative, I took out my purse, took from it enough to bait my horse at Horsham, and to clear my turnpikes at Worth, whither I was going in order to stay awhile, and gave him the rest.

"It may be feared by an ardent-minded young man, that the great sobriety of conduct in a young woman, for which I have been so strenuously contending, argues a want of that warmth, which he naturally so much desires; and if my observation and experience warranted the entertaining of that fear, I should say, had I to live my life over again, give me the warmth, and I will stand my chance as to the rest. But this observation and this experience tell me the contrary. They tell me that levity is, ninety times out of a hundred, the companion of a want of ardent feeling. Women of light minds have seldom any ardent passion; (we take this *cum grano salis*,) love is a mere name unless confined to one object, and young women in whom levity of conduct is observable, will not be thus restricted. That levity, which in a French girl I should not have thought a great deal of, would have frightened me away from an English or an American girl. When I was in France, just after I was married, there happened to be amongst our acquaintance, a gay sprightly girl of about seventeen. I was remonstrating with her one day, on the facility with which she seemed to shift her smiles from object to object, and she, stretching one arm out in an upward direction, the other in a downward direction, raising

herself upon one foot, leaning her body on one side, and thus throwing herself into a *flying* attitude, answered my grave lecture by singing in a very sweet voice, significantly bowing her head and smiling at the same time, the following lines from the vaudeville in the play of Figaro :

Si l'amour a des ailles
N'est ce pas pour voltiger ?

That is, "If love has wings, is it not to flutter about with?" The wit, argument, and manner altogether silenced me. She, after I left France, married a very worthy man, has had a large family, and has been and is a most excellent wife and mother. But that, which does sometimes well in France, does not do here at all. Our manners are more grave, steadiness is the rule, and levity the exception. Love may *voltige* in France, but in England it cannot, with safety to the lover; and it is a truth, which no man of attentive observation will deny, that as, in general, English wives are more warm in their conjugal attachments than those of France; so with regard to individuals, that those English women, who are the most light in their manners, and who are the least constant in their attachments, have the smallest portion of that warmth, that indescribable passion, which God has given to human beings as the great counterbalance to all the sorrows and sufferings of life."

The next virtue which Mr. Cobbett expects to find in a wife, is industry, but he says, "I do not thereby mean merely laboriousness, merely labour or activity of body for purposes of gain or of saving; for there may be industry amongst those, who have more money than they know well what to do with, and there may be lazy ladies, as well as lazy farmers and tradesmen's wives. There is no state in life in which industry in the wife is not necessary to the happiness and prosperity of the family, at the head of the household affairs of which she is placed. If she be lazy, there will be lazy servants, and which (what?) is a great deal worse,

children habitually lazy ; every thing, however necessary to be done, will be put off to the last moment—then it will be done badly, and in many cases not at all ; the dinner will be too late ; the journey or the visit will be tardy ; inconveniences of all sorts will be continually arising ; there will always be a heavy arrear of things unperformed ; and this even amongst the wealthy of all is a great curse, but if they have no business imposed upon them by necessity, they make business for themselves ; life would be unbearable without it, and therefore a lazy woman must always be a curse, be her rank or station what it may.

“ But who is to tell, whether a girl will make an industrious woman ? How is the purblind lover able to ascertain, whether she, whose smiles and dimples and bewitching lips have half bereft him of his senses ? how is he able to judge, from any thing that he can see, whether the blessed object will be industrious or lazy ? Why, it is very difficult ; it is a matter that reason has very little to do with, but there are, nevertheless, certain outward and visible signs, from which a man not wholly deprived of the use of his reason, may form a pretty accurate judgment as to this matter. It was a story in Philadelphia some years ago, that a young man, who was courting one of three sisters, happened to be on a visit to her, when all the three were present, and when one of them said to the other, ‘ *I wonder where our needle is.* ’ Upon which, he withdrew as soon as was consistent with the rules of politeness, resolved never to think more of a girl, who possessed a needle only in partnership, and who it appeared, was not too well informed, as to the place where even that share was deposited.

“ This was to be sure a very flagrant instance of a want of industry, for if the third part of the use of a needle satisfied her when single, it was reasonable to anticipate that marriage would banish that useful implement altogether. But such instances are seldom allowed to come in contact with the eyes and ears of the lover ; to disguise all defects from whom, is the great business, not only of the girl her-

self, but of the whole family. There are, however, certain outward signs, which, if attended to with care, will serve as pretty sure guides. And first, if you find the tongue lazy, you may be nearly certain that the hands and feet are the same. By laziness of the tongue, I do not mean silence; I do not mean an absence of talk, for that is in most cases very good, but I mean a slow and soft utterance; a sort of sighing out the words, instead of speaking them, a sort of letting the sounds fall out, as if the party were sick at stomach. The pronunciation of an industrious person is generally quick, distinct, and the voice, if not strong, firm at the least, not masculine, as feminine as possible; not a croak nor a brawl, but a quick, distinct, and sound voice. Nothing is more disgusting than what the sensible country people call a *maw-mouthed woman*. A maw-mouthed man is bad enough, he is sure to be a lazy fellow; but a woman of this description, in addition to her laziness, soon becomes the most disgusting of matches. In this whole world, there is nothing much more hateful than a female's under jaw lazily moving up and down, and letting out a long string of half articulate sounds. It is impossible for any man, who has any spirit in him, to love such a woman for any length of time.

“Look a little also at the labour of the teeth, for these correspond with other members of the body and with the operations of the mind. “Quick at meals, quick at work,” is a saying as old as the hills, in this the most industrious nation upon the earth; and never was there a truer saying. But fashion comes in here and decides that you shall not be quick at meals, that you shall sit and carry on the affair of eating for an hour or more. Good God! what have I not suffered on this account. However, though she may sit as long as the rest, and though she must join in the performance, for it is a real performance unto the end of the last scene, she cannot make her teeth abandon their character, she may and must suffer the slice to linger on the plate, and must make the supply slow in order to fill up the time, but when she *does* bite, she cannot well disguise what nature has taught her to

do; and you may be assured if her jaws move in slow time, and if she rather squeeze, than bite her food, if she so deal with it as to leave you in doubt as to whether she mean finally to admit or reject it; if she deal with it thus, set her down as being in her very nature incorrigibly lazy. Never mind the pieces of needle work, the tambouring, the maps of the world made by her needle. Get to see her at work upon a nation chop or a bit of bread and cheese, and if she deal quickly with these, you have pretty good security, for that activity, that stirring industry, without which a wife is a burden, instead of being a help. And as to love, it cannot live for more than a month or two, in the breast of a man of spirit, towards a lazy woman.

"Another mark of industry is a quick step, and a somewhat heavy tread, showing that the foot comes down with a hearty good will; and if the body lean a little forward, and the eyes keep steadily in the same direction, while the feet are going, so much the better, for these discover earnestness to arrive at the intended point. I do not like, and I never liked your *sauntering*, soft-stepping girls, who move as if they were perfectly indifferent as to the result; and as to the love part of the story, whoever expects ardent and lasting affection from one of those *sauntering* girls, will, when too late, find his mistake: the character runs the same all the way through, and no man ever yet saw a *sauntering* girl, who did not, when married, make a mawkish wife, and a cold-hearted mother; care a very little for either husband or children, and of course having no store of those blessings, which are the natural resources to apply to in sickness and in old age.

"Early rising is another mark of industry, and though, in the higher situations of life, it may be of no importance in a pecuniary point of view, it is even there of importance in other respects, for it is, I imagine, pretty difficult to keep love alive towards a woman who never sees the dew, never beholds the rising sun, and who constantly comes directly from a reeking bed to the breakfast table, and there chews about, without appetite, the choicest morsels of human food. A

man might perhaps endure this for a month or two, without being disgusted, but that is ample allowance of time. And as to people in the middle ranks of life, where a living and a provision for children is, (are?) to be sought by labour of some sort or other, late rising in the wife is *certain ruin*; and there never was yet an early rising wife, who had been a late rising girl. If brought up to late rising, she will like it; it will be her habit, she will, when married, never want excuses for indulging in the habit; at first she will be indulged without bounds; to make a change afterwards will be difficult; it will be deemed a wrong done to her; she will ascribe it to diminished affection; a quarrel must ensue, or the husband must submit to be ruined, or at the very least, to see half the fruit of his labours snored and lounged away. And is this being rigid? Is it being harsh? Is it being hard upon a woman? Is it the offspring of frigid severity of age? It is none of these: it arises from an ardent desire to promote the happiness, and to add to the natural, legitimate, and salutary influence of the female sex. The tendency of this advice is, to promote the preservation of their health; to prolong the duration of their beauty; to cause them to be beloved to the last day of their lives, and to give them, during the whole of their lives, weight and consequence, of which, laziness would render them wholly unworthy.

“The next virtue is frugality, and this means the contrary of extravagance. It does not mean stinginess, it does not mean a pinching of the belly, nor a stripping of the back; but it means an abstaining from all unnecessary expenditure, and all unnecessary use of goods of any and of every sort. And a quality of great importance it is, whether the rank in life be high or low. Some people indeed, are so rich, they have such an overabundance of money and goods, that how to get rid of them would, to a looker-on, seem to be their only difficulty. But while the inconvenience of even these immense masses is not too great to be overcome by a really extravagant woman, who jumps with joy at a basket of strawberries at a guinea an ounce, and who would not give a

straw for green peas later in the year than January; while such a dame would lighten the bags of a loan-monger, or shorten the rent-roll of half a dozen peerages amalgamated into one possession, she would, with very little study and application of her talent, send a nobleman of ordinary estate to the poor house or the pension list, which may justly be considered as the poor book of the aristocracy. How many noblemen and gentlemen of fine estates have been ruined and degraded by the extravagance of their wives. More frequently by their *own* extravagance perhaps, but in numerous instances, by that of those whose duty it is to assist in upholding their stations by husbanding their fortunes.

“If this be the case amongst the opulent, who have estates to draw upon, what must be the consequences of a want of frugality in the middle and lower ranks of life? here it must be fatal, and especially amongst that description of persons whose wives have, in many cases, the receiving as well as the expending of money. In such a case, there wants nothing but extravagance in the wife to make ruin as sure as the arrival of old age. To obtain security against this is very difficult, yet if the lover be not quite blind, he may easily discover a propensity towards extravagance. The object of his addresses will, nine times out of ten, not be the manager of a house; but she must have her dress, and other little matters under her control. If she be costly in these; if in these she step above her rank, or even to the top of it; if she purchase all she is able to purchase, and prefer the showy to the useful, the gay and the fragile to the less sightly and more durable, he may be sure that the disposition will cling to her through life. If he perceive in her a taste for costly food, costly furniture, costly amusements; if he find her a lover of gratification, to be bounded only by her want of means; if he find her full of admiration of the trappings of the rich, and of desire to be able to imitate them, he may be pretty sure that she will not spare his purse, when once she gets her hands into it, and, therefore, if he can bid adieu to her charms, the sooner he does it the better.

“The outward and visible and vulgar signs of extravagance are rings, brooches, bracelets, buckles, necklaces, diamonds, real or mock, and in short, all the *hardware* which women put upon their persons. These things may be proper enough in palaces, or in scenes resembling palaces, but when they make their appearance amongst people in the middle rank of life, when after all, they only serve to show that poverty in the parties, which they wish to disguise; when the nasty, mean, tawdry things make their appearance in this rank of life, they are the sure indications of a disposition that will always be straining at what it can never attain. To marry a girl of this description is really self-destruction. You can never have either property or peace. Earn her a horse to ride, she will want a gig; earn the gig, she will want a chariot; get her that, she will long for a coach and four, and from stage to stage she will torment you to the end of her or your days; for still there will be somebody with a finer equipage than you can give her, and as long as this is the case, you will never have rest. Reason would tell her that she never could be at the top, that she must stop at some point short of that, and that therefore all expenses in the rivalry are so much thrown away. But reason and brooches and bracelets do not go in company; the girl who has not the sense to discover that her person is disfigured, and not beautified by parcels of brass and tin, for they are generally little better, and other hardware stuck about her body; the girl who is so foolish not to perceive that when silks, and cottons, and cambrics in their neatest form, have done their best, nothing more is to be done, the girl who cannot perceive this, is too great a fool to be trusted with the purse of any man.

“The next virtue is cleanliness. This is a capital ingredient in the composition of marriage, for there never yet was, and there never will be love of long duration, sincere and ardent love in any man towards a filthy mate. I mean any man in England, or in those parts of America where the people have descended from the English. I do not say that

there are not men enough, even in England, to live peaceably and even contentedly with dirty sluttish women, for there are some, who seem to like the filth well enough. But what I contend for is this, that there never can exist for any length of time ardent affection in any man towards a woman, who is filthy, either in her person or in her house-affairs. Men may be careless as to their own persons; they may from the nature of their business, or from their want of time to adhere to neatness in dress, be slovenly in their own dress and habits, but they do not relish this in their wives, who must still have charms, and charms and filth do not go together.

"It is not dress that the husband wants to be perpetual; it is not finery, but cleanliness is everything. The French women dress enough, especially when they stalk forth, see them, however, at home, *ils sont bien saillés*. It has been aptly said, that French women are pigs in the parlour, and peacocks on the promenade. But this occasional cleanliness is not the thing that an English or an American husband wants: he wants it always, in doors as well as out, by night as well as by day, on the floor as well as on the table; and however he may grumble about "the fuss," and the expense of it, he would grumble more if he had it not. I once saw a picture representing the amusements of Portuguese lovers, that is to say, three or four young men dressed in gold or silver-laced clothes, each having a young girl dressed like a princess, and affectionately engaged in *hunting down and killing the vermin in his head*.* This was perhaps an exaggeration, but that it should have had the shadow of foundation, was enough to fill me with contempt for the whole nation.

* This is by no means an uncommon sight in Russia, it is there considered as a matter of course, for a lover to repose his head on the lap of his innamorata, in order that she may rid it of a few living inconveniences, who may have located themselves in the ringlets of his hair. Sometimes the girl is revulsed, and the lover becomes the hunter, now does his affection in the least decrease from the abundance of the game which he destroys.

"The signs of cleanliness are, in the first place, a clean skin. An English girl will hardly let her lover see the stale dirt between her fingers, as I have many times seen it between those of French women, and even ladies of all ages. An English girl will have her face clean, to be sure, if there be soap and water within her reach; but get a glance, just a glance at her poll, if you have any doubt on the subject, or if you find there, or behind the ears, what the Yorkshire people call *grime*, the sooner you cease your visits, the better. I hope now no young women will be offended at this, and think me too severe on her sex; I am only saying, I am only telling the women, that which all men think, and it is a decided advantage to them to be fully informed of *our thoughts* on the subject. If any one who shall read this, find, upon self-examination, that she is defective in this respect, there is plenty of time for remedying the defect.

"In the dress you can, amongst rich people, find little wisdom to form a judgment as to cleanliness, because they have not only the dress prepared for them, but put upon them *à la mode*. But in the middle rank of life, the dress is a good criterion in two respects; first, as to its colour, for if the white be a sort of yellow, cleanly hands would have been at work to prevent that. A *white-yellow* cravat or shirt on a man, speaks at once the character of his wife, and be assured that she will not take with your dress pains, which she had never taken with her own. Then the manner of putting on the dress is no bad foundation for judging. If it be careless, slovenly, if it do not fit properly, no matter for its *intrinsic* quality, mean as it may be, it may be neatly and trimly put on, and if it be not, take care of yourself, for as you will soon find to your cost, a sloven in one thing is a sloven in all things. The country people judge greatly from the state of the covering of the ankles, and if that be not clean and tight, they conclude, that all out of sight is not what it ought to be. Look at the *shoes*! if they be trodden on one side, loose on the foot, or run down at the heel, it is a very bad

sign; and as to slip-shod, though at coming down in the morning, and even before daylight, make up your mind to a rope, rather than live with a slip-shod wife.

"Oh how much do women lose by inattention to these matters. Men in general say nothing about it to their wives, but they *think* about it; they envy their luckier neighbours, and in numerous cases, consequences the most serious arise from this apparently trifling cause. Beauty is valuable, it is one of the ties, and a strong tie too, that cannot, however, last to old age, but the charm of cleanliness never ends but with life itself. I recommend, however, every young woman to engrave the following words on her heart: 'The sweetest flowers, when they become putrid, stink the most, and a nasty woman is the nastiest thing in nature.'

"Without the knowledge of domestic affairs, a lady, even the wife of a peer, is a poorish thing. It was the fashion in former times for ladies to understand a great deal about these affairs, and it would be very hard to make me believe that this did not tend to promote the interests and honour of their husbands. The affairs of a great family never can be well managed, if left wholly to hirelings, and there are many parts of these affairs, in which it would be unseemly for the husband to meddle. Surely no lady can be too high in rank to make it proper for her to be well acquainted with the character and general demeanor of all the female servants. To receive and give them characters, is too much to be left to a servant, however good, and of service however long. Much of the ease and happiness of the great and rich must depend on the character of those by whom they are served; they live under the same roof with them; they are frequently the children of their tenants, or poorer neighbours. The conduct of their whole lives must be influenced by the examples and precepts which they here imbibe; and when ladies consider how much more weight there must be in one word from them, than in ten thousand words from a person who, call her what you like, is still a fellow servant; it does not appear strange that they should forego the performance of this at once im-

portant and pleasing part of their duty. It was from the mansions of noblemen and gentlemen, and not from boarding schools, that farmers and tradesmen formerly took their wives, and though these days are gone, with little chance of returning, there is still something left for ladies to do, in checking that torrent of immorality which is now crowding the streets with prostitutes and the jails with thieves.

"I am, however, now addressing myself to persons in the middle ranks of life; and here a knowledge of domestic affairs is so necessary in every wife, that the lover ought to have it constantly before his eyes. Not only a knowledge of these affairs, not only to know how things ought to be done, but how to do them; not only to know what ingredients are to be put into a pie or a pudding, but to be able to make the pie or the pudding. Young people, when they come together, ought not, unless they have fortunes, or are in a great way of business, to think about servants. Servants for what? To help them to eat and drink and sleep? When children come, there must be some help in a farmer's or tradesman's house, but until then, what call for a servant in a house, the master of which has to earn every mouthful that is consumed.

"Eating and drinking come three times every day; they must come; and however little we may, in the days of our health and vigour, care about choice food and about cookery, we very soon get tired of heavy or burnt bread, and of spoiled joints of meat; we bear them for a time or two perhaps, but about the third time, we lament inwardly; about the fifth time it must be an extraordinary honeymoon that will keep us from complaining; if the like continue for a month or two, we begin to repent, and then adieu to all our anticipated delights. We discover, when it is too late, that we have not got a helpmate but a burden; and the fire of love being damped, the unfortunately educated creature, whose parents are more to blame than she is, is, unless she resolve to learn her duty, doomed to lead a life approaching to that of misery, for however considerate the husband, he never can

esteem her as he would have done, had she been skilled and able in domestic affairs.

"The mere manual performance of domestic labours is not indeed absolutely necessary in the female head of the family of professional men, such as lawyers, doctors, and parsons; but even here, and also in the case of great merchants and of gentlemen living on their fortunes, surely the head of the household ought to be able to give directions as to the purchasing of meat, salting meat, making bread, making preserves of all sorts, and ought to see the thing done, or that they may be done. She ought to take care that food be well cooked, drink properly prepared and kept, that there be always a sufficient supply; that there be good living, without waste, and that in her department, nothing shall be seen inconsistent with the rank, station, and character of her husband, who, if he have a skilful and industrious wife, will, unless he be of a singularly foolish turn, gladly leave all these things to her absolute dominion, controlled only by the extent of the whole expenditure, of which he must be the best, and indeed the sole judge.

"But in a farmer or a tradesman's family, the manual performance is actually necessary whether there be servants or not. No one knows how to teach another so well as one who has done, and can do the thing himself. It was said of a famous French commander, that in attacking an enemy, he did not say to his men, "go on," but "come on," and whoever has well observed the movements of servants, must know what a prodigious difference there is in the effect of the words, *go* and *come*. A very good rule would be, to have nothing to eat in a farmer's or tradesman's house, that the mistress did not know how to prepare and to cook; no pudding, tart, pie, or cake, that she did not know how to make. Never fear the toil to her, exercise is good for health, and without health there is no beauty; a sick beauty may excite pity, but pity is a short-lived passion. Besides, what is the labour in such a case, and how many thousands of ladies, who loll away the day, would give half their fortunes

for that sound sleep which the stirring housewife seldom fails to enjoy ?

“ Yet if a young farmer or tradesman marry a girl, who has been brought up to play music, to what is called to draw, to sing, to waste paper, pen and ink, in writing long and half romantic letters, and to see shows, and plays, and read novels, if a young man do marry such an unfortunate young creature, let him bear the consequences with temper ; let him be just, and justice will teach him to treat her with great indulgence, to endeavour to cause her to learn her business as a wife ; to be patient with her, to reflect that he has taken her, being apprised of her inability ; to bear in mind that he was or seemed to be pleased with her showy and useless acquirements, and that when the gratification of his passion has been accomplished, he is unjust, and cruel, and unmanly, if he turn round upon her, and accuse her of a want of that knowledge which he well knew that she did not possess.

“ For my part I do not know, nor can I form an idea of a more unfortunate being than a girl with a mere boarding school education, and without a fortune to enable her to keep a servant when married. Of what use are her accomplishments ? Of what use her music, her drawing, her romantic epistles ? If she be good in her nature, the first little faint ery of her first baby, drives all the tunes, and all the landscapes, and all the *Clarissa Harlowe*’s out of her head for ever. I once saw a very striking instance of this sort. It was a climb-over-the-wall match, and I gave the bride away at St. Margaret’s church, Westminster, the pair being as handsome a pair as ever I saw in my life. Beauty, although in double quantity, would not pay the baker and butcher, and after an absence of little more than a year, I found the husband in prison for debt, but I there found also his wife, with her baby, and she, who never before her marriage, had known what it was to get water to wash her own hands, and whose talk was all about music and the like, was now the cheerful sustainer of her husband, and the most affectionate of mothers. All the music, and all the drawing, and

all the plays and romances were gone to the winds. The husband and the baby had fairly supplanted them, and even the prison scene was a blessing, as it gave her at this early stage, an opportunity of proving her devotion to her husband, and although he was in a part of America where I could not see him, when I was there, he has, I am sure, amply repaid her for her devotion.

"The like of this, however, is not to be looked for every day; no man ought to think that he has even a chance of it. Besides, the husband was in this case, a man of learning and of great natural ability, he had not had to get his bread by farming or trade, and in all probability, his wife has had the leisure to practise those acquirements, which she possessed at the time of her marriage. But can this be the case with the farmer or tradesman's wife? She has to *help to earn a provision* for her children, or at least to help to earn a store for sickness or old age. She therefore ought to be qualified to begin at once to assist her husband in his earnings. The way in which she can most efficiently assist, is, by taking care of his property, by expending his money to the greatest advantage, by wasting nothing; by making the table sufficiently abundant with the least expense. And how is she to do these things, unless she have been brought up to understand domestic affairs? How is she to do these things, if she have been taught to think these matters beneath her study? How is any man to expect her to do these things, if she have been so bred up as to make her habitually look upon them as worthy the attention of none but low and ignorant wummen?

"Ignorant indeed! ignorance consists in a want of knowledge of those things, which your calling or state of life naturally supposes you to understand. A ploughman is not an ignorant man, because he does not know how to read; if he knows how to plough, he is not to be called an ignorant man; but a wife may justly be called an ignorant woman if she does not know how to provide a dinner for her husband. It is cold comfort for a hungry man to tell him how

delightfully his wife plays and sings. Lovers may live on very aëriel diet, but husbands stand in need of the solids; and young women may take my word for it, that a constantly clean board, well-cooked victuals, a house in order, and a cheerful fire, will do more in preserving a husband's heart than all the *accomplishments* taught in all the *establishments* in the world.

" *Good temper* is a most eminent virtue in a wife, but it is a very difficult thing to ascertain before-hand. Smiles are so cheap; they are so easily put on for the occasion, and besides, the frowns are, according to the lover's whim, interpreted into the contrary. By good temper, I do not mean easy temper, a serenity which nothing disturbs, for that is a mark of laziness and sulkiness; if you be not too blind to perceive it, it is a temper to be avoided by all means. A sulky man is bad enough, what then must be a sulky woman? and that woman a wife, a constant inmate, a companion day and night. Only think of the delight of sitting at the same table, and sleeping in the same bed for a week, and not exchange a word all the while. Very bad to be scolding for such a length of time, but this is far better than the sulks. If you have your eyes and look sharp, you will discover symptoms of this, if it unhappily exist. She will at some time or other show it towards some one or other of the family, or perhaps towards yourself, and you may be quite sure that in this respect, marriage will not mend her. Sulkiness arises from capricious displeasure, displeasure not founded on reason. The party takes offence unjustifiably; is unable to form a complaint, and therefore expresses displeasure by silence. The remedy for sulkiness is to suffer it to take its full swing, but it is better not to have the disease in your house, and to be *married* to it, is little short of madness.

" *Querulousness* is a great fault; no man, and especially no woman likes to hear eternal plaintiveness. That she complain, and roundly complain of your want of punctuality, of your coolness, of your neglect, of your liking the com-

pany of others; these are all very well, more especially as they are frequently but too just. But an everlasting complaining, without rhyme or reason is a bad sign. It shows want of patience, and indeed a want of sense, but on the contrary of this, a cold indifference is still worse. 'When will you come again?' 'You can never find time to come here.' 'You like any company better than mine.' These complaints when groundless, are very teasing, and demonstrate a disposition too full of anxiousness; but from a girl, who always receives you with the same *civil* smile, lets you at your own good pleasure depart with the same, and who, when you take her by the hand, holds out her cold fingers, as straight as sticks, I say, or I should say, if I were young, God! in his mercy preserve me.

"Pertinacity is a very bad thing in any body, and especially in a young woman, and it is sure to increase in force with the age of the party. To have the last word, is a poor triumph, but with some people it is a species of a disease of the mind. In a wife it must be extremely troublesome, and if you find an ounce of it in the maid, it will become a pound in the wife. An eternal disputer is a most disagreeable companion, and where young women thrust their ~~say~~ into conversation carried on by older persons; give their opinions in a positive manner, and court a contest of the tongue, those must be very bold men, who will encounter them as wives.

"Still, of all the faults as to temper, your melancholy ladies have the worst, unless you have the same mental disease. Most wives are at times, *miser*y-makers, but these carry it on as a regular trade; they are always unhappy about something, either past, present, or to come. Both arms full of children is a pretty efficient remedy in most cases; but if the ingredients be wanting, a little *want*, a little *real trouble*, a little *genuine affliction*, must, if you would affect a cure, be resorted to. But this is very painful to a man of any feeling, and therefore the best way is to avoid a connexion, which is to give you a life of wailing and sighs.

Beauty, that great desideratum of the female, and which it is difficult to persuade some women that they do not possess, although their mirror flatly and impudently tells them so, whenever they look into it, is considered by Cobbett as by no means the least desirable thing in a wife. The less favoured part of the sex say, that beauty is but skin deep, and this is very true, "but," says Cobbett, "it is very agreeable for all that. Pictures are only paint deep, or pencil deep, but we admire them nevertheless. 'Handsome is that handsome does,' used to say to me, an old man, who had marked me out for his not-over-handsome daughter. 'Please your eye and plague your heart,' is an adage that want of beauty invented, I dare say more than a thousand years ago. These adages would say, if they had but the courage, that beauty is inconsistent with chasity, with sobriety of conduct, and with all the female virtues. The argument is, that beauty exposes the possessor to greater temptations than women not beautiful are exposed to, and that therefore their fall is more probable. Let us see a little how this matter stands.

"It is certainly true, that pretty girls will have more and more ardent admirers than ugly ones; but as to their temptation, when in their unmarried state, there are few so very ugly, as to be exposed to no temptation at all; and which is the most likely to resist, she, who has a choice of lovers, or she who, if she let the occasion slip, may never have it again? which of the two is most likely to set a high value upon her reputation—she, whom all beholders admire, or she, who is admired at best by mere chance? And as to women in the married state, this argument assumes, that when they fall, it is from their own vicious disposition; when the fact is, if you search the annals of conjugal infidelity, you will find that, nine times out of ten, *the fault is in the husband*. It is his neglect, his flagrant disregard, his frosty indifference, his foul example; to these, nine times out of ten, he owes the infidelity of his wife; and if I were to say ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the facts, if verified, would, I am certain, bear me out. And whence this neglect, this disregard, this

frosty indifference, this foul example? Because it is easy, in so many cases, to find some woman more beautiful than the wife. This is no justification for the husband to plead; for he has with his eyes open made a solemn contract. If he have not beauty enough to please him, he should have sought it in some other woman; if, as is frequently the case, he have preferred rank or money to beauty, he is an unprincipled man, if he do any thing to make her unhappy, who has brought him the rank or the money. At any rate, as conjugal infidelity is, in so many cases as it is, generally caused by the want of affection and due attention in the husband, it follows of course, that it must more frequently happen in the case of ugly than of handsome women.

"In point of dress, nothing need be said to convince any reasonable man, that beautiful women will be less expensive in this respect than women of a contrary description.* Experience teaches us, that ugly women are always the most studious about their dress, and if we had never observed upon the dress, reason would tell us that it must be so. Few women are handsome without knowing it; and if they know that their features naturally attract admiration, will they desire to draw it off, and to fix it on lace, silk, and jewels?"

With all due deference to the sagacity and experience of William Cobbett, we cannot bring ourselves to subscribe to his opinion contained in the foregoing passage. A woman in her own estimation cannot be too beautiful; and to say that a beautiful woman is less solicitous about her dress, because she happens to know that she is beautiful, is at direct variance with the experience, which we may have acquired of the complicated machinery by which female action is regulated. We never knew a beautiful woman, who did not call the poet a fusty, moping, sour, crabbed fellow, for telling her, that beauty when unadorned, is adorned the most. In fact, although the position of Cobbett may, and we believe is true, that an ugly woman will exhibit an extraordinary degree of

* Q. E. D. *Ed.*

anxiety to call in the aid of dress to enhance the few charms, which Nature, in a stingy mood, may have bestowed upon her; yet, on the other hand, there is no woman, great as the beauty may be, with which Nature, in one of her most lavish humours, may have endowed her, who does not betray the utmost solicitude to augment the force of her personal charms by all the effect which dress or ornament can impart to them.

On this subject, Cobbett further says, "As to manners and temper, there are certainly some handsome women, who are conceited and arrogant, but as they have all the best reasons in the world for being pleased with themselves, they afford you the best chance of general good humour, and this good humour is a very valuable commodity in the married state. Some that are called handsome, and that are such at the first glance, are dull inanimate things, that might as well have been made of wax or of wood. But the truth is, that this is not beauty, for this is not to be found *only* in the *form* of the features, but in the movements of them also. Besides, Nature is here very impartial, for she gives animation promiscuously to the handsome as well as to the ugly, and the want of this in the former, is surely as bearable as in the latter."

We, however, assert that an ugly woman, taken in the common acception of the phrase, is frequently a fascinating woman, as if Nature had resolved to make some amends to her for not having just given her that cast of countenance, which may be denominated beautiful. The most graceful, fascinating, amiable, and affable woman that we ever knew in our life, was universally allowed to be decidedly ugly, nor, if she had been decked out in the most elegant and tasteful dress, which the ingenuity of the most accomplished milliner of St. James' could have devised, would she have risen one degree in the scale of beauty; on the other hand, one of the most beautiful women we ever saw, and for a drawing of whose countenance Sir Thomas Lawrence offered £500, was in her heart a fiend, in her house a shrew, to her unfortunate

husband a Xantippe, and in her general conduct a Messalina.

"But," says Cobbett, "the great use of female beauty, the great practical advantage of it, is, that it naturally and unavoidably tends to keep the husband in good humour with himself; to make him, to use the dealer's phrase, pleased with his bargain. When old age approaches and the parties have become endeared to each other by a long series of joint cares and interests, and when children have come and bound them together by the strongest ties that nature has in store; at this age the features and the person are of less consequence, but in the young days of matrimony, when the roving eye of the bachelor is scarcely become steady in the head of the husband, it is dangerous for him to see, every time he stirs out, a face more captivating than that of the person to whom he is bound for life. Beauty is in some degree a matter of taste, what one man admires, another does not, and it is fortunate for us that it is thus. But still there are certain things that all men admire, and a husband is always pleased when he perceives that a portion, at least, of these things are in his own possession; he takes this possession as a compliment to himself; there must, he will think the world will believe, have been some merit in him, some charm, seen or unseen, to have caused him to be blessed with the acquisition.

"And then there arise so many things, sickness, misfortune in business, losses, many, many things, wholly unexpected, and there are so many circumstances, perfectly nameless, to communicate to the new married man the fact that it is not a real angel, of whom he has got the possession; there are so many and such powerful dampers of the passions, and so many incentives to cool reflection, that it requires something, and a good deal too, to keep the husband in countenance in this his altered and enlightened state. The passion of women does not cool so soon; the lamp of their love burns more steadily, and even brightens as it burns, and there is, the young man may be assured, a vast difference in the effect of the fondness of a pretty woman, and that of one

of a different description, and let reason and philosophy say what they will, a man will come down stairs of a morning better pleased after seeing the former, than he would after seeing the latter in her *night cap*.

“To be sure when a man has, from whatever inducement, once married a woman, he is unjust and cruel if he even slight her on account of her want of beauty, and if he treat her harshly on this account, he is a brute. But it requires a greater degree of reflection and consideration than falls to the lot of men in general, to make them act with justice in such a case; and therefore the best way is, to guard, if you can, against the temptation to commit such an injustice, which is to be done in no other way, than by not marrying any one that you do not think handsome.”

In this manner Cobbett closes his advice to a lover, and whoever can rise up from the perusal of it, without being benefited, be they either a male or a female lover, must have a heart imperviously closed to those principles of instruction, on the proper use of which the happiness of life depends. The whole is a series of sterling truths drawn from the experience of no common head; but independently of the utility, which they cannot fail of proving to all who stand in the relations of life as described by Cobbett, yet the motive for giving them a place in this part of the work was, to expose the difference between theory and practice in those affairs, on which Cobbett gives his advice, and thereby to show whether he himself acted up to those principles which he so ably and so incomparably impresses upon others. It must however, be remarked that, in the autobiography of Cobbett, which embraces but a short period of his life, and in his other voluminous works, a knowledge of his real character as a man, is only to be obtained from some casual glances which he allows us to catch of the scenes in which he moved, and which appear at times to come across his memory as if by association, or an illustration of the subject on which he was then treating. Thus, the following graphic description of his courtship would, perhaps, have been lost to the world,

had he not adduced it as an example of the inconstancy of the human heart in the affections between the two sexes, quoting himself as an illustration of the wrong which a young woman endures by the attention of an individual, who is himself under a prior engagement, and who entertains no real intention of making her his wife.

"There are, however," says Cobbett, "certain cases in which you deceive, or nearly deceive yourself, cases in which you are by degrees and by circumstances deluded into something very nearly resembling sincere love for a second object, the first still, however, maintaining her ground in your heart; cases in which you are not actuated by vanity, in which you are not guilty of injustice or cruelty, but cases in which you, nevertheless, *do wrong*; and as I once did a wrong of this sort myself, I will here give a history of it as a warning to every young man who may read it; that being the best, and indeed the only atonement, that I can make or ever could have made for this only serious sin that I ever committed against the female sex.

"The province of New Brunswick in North America, in which I passed my years from the age of eighteen to that of twenty-six, consists in general of heaps of rocks, in the interstices of which grow the pine, the spruce, and various sorts of fir trees, or where the woods have been burnt down, the bushes of the raspberry or those of the huckle-berry. The province is cut asunder by a great river called the St. John, about two hundred miles in length, and at half way from the mouth, full a mile wide. Into this main river run innumerable smaller rivers, there called *creeks*. On the side of these creeks, the land is in places clear of rocks; it is in these places generally good and productive. The trees that grow here, are the birch, the maple, and others of the deciduous class; natural meadows here and there present themselves, and some of these spots far surpass in natural beauty any other that my eyes ever beheld: the creeks abounding towards their sources in waterfalls of endless variety, as well in form as in magnitude, and always teeming with fish, while water

fowl enliven their surface, and while wild pigeons of the gayest plumage, flutter in thousands upon thousands amongst the branches of the beautiful trees, which sometimes for miles together form an arch over the creeks.

"I, in one of my rambles in the woods, in which I took great delight, came to a spot at a very short distance from the source of one of these creeks. Here was every thing to delight the eye, and especially of one like me, who seems to have been born to love rural life, and trees, and plants of all sorts. Here there were about two hundred acres of natural meadow, interspersed with patches of maple trees in various forms and of various extent; the creek, there about thirty miles from its point of joining St. John, ran down the middle of the spot, which formed a sort of dish, the high and rocky hills rising all round it, except at the outlet of the creek, and these hills crowned with lofty pines; in the hills were the sources of the creek, the waters of which came down in cascades, for any one of which many a nobleman in England, if he could transfer it, would give a good slice of his fertile estate, and in the creek, at the foot of the cascades, there were in the season, salmon the finest in the world, and so abundant and so easily taken, as to be used for manuring the land.

"If Nature in her very best humour had made a spot for the express purpose of captivating me, she could not have exceeded the efforts which she had here made. But I found something here, besides these rude works of nature. I found something, in the fashioning of which, *man* had had something to do. I found a large and well-built log dwelling house, standing (in the month of September,) on the edge of a very good field of Indian corn, by the side of which there was a piece of buck wheat just then mowed. I found a homestead, and some very pretty cows. I found all the things by which an easy and happy farmer is surrounded, and I found something beyond all these, something that was destined to give me a great deal of pleasure, and also a great deal of pain, both in their extreme degree, and both of which, in spite of

the lapse of forty years, now make an attempt to rush back into my heart.

"Partly from misinformation, and partly from miscalculation, I had lost my way, and quite alone, but armed with my sword and a brace of pistols, to defend myself against the bears, I arrived at the log-house in the middle of a moonlight night, the hoar frost covering the trees and the grass; a stout and clamorous dog, kept off by the gleaming of my sword, waked the master of the house, who got up, received me with great hospitality, got me something to eat, and put me into (?) a feather bed, a thing that I had been a stranger to for some years. I being very tired, had tried to pass the night in the woods, between the trunks of two large trees, which had fallen side by side, and within a yard of each other. I had made for myself a nest of dry fern, and had made a covering by laying boughs of spruce across the trunks of the trees. But unable to sleep on account of the cold, becoming sick from the great quantity of water that I had drank during the heat of the day, and being moreover alarmed at the noise of the bears, and lest one of them should find me in a defenceless state, I had roused myself up, and had crept along as well as I could. So that no hero of eastern romance ever experienced a more enchanting change.

"I had got into the house of one of those Yankee royalists, who, at the close of the revolutionary war, which until it had succeeded was called a rebellion, had accepted of grants of land in the king's province of New Brunswick, and who, to the great honour of England, had been furnished with all the means of making new and comfortable settlements. I was suffered to sleep till breakfast time, when I found a table, the like of which I have since seen so many times in the United States, loaded with good things. The master and mistress of the house, aged about fifty, were like what an English farmer and his wife were half a century ago. Here were two sons tall and stout, who appeared to have come in from work, and the youngest of whom was about my age, then twenty-three.

But there was *another member* of the family aged nineteen, dressed according to the neat and simple fashion of New England, whence she had come with her parents five or six years before, had her long light brown hair twisted nicely up, and fastened on the top of her head, in which head were a pair of lively blue eyes, associated with features, of which that softness and that sweetness so characteristic of American girls, were the predominant expressions, the whole being set off by a complexion indicative of glowing health; and form, figure, movement, and all taken together, an assemblage of beauties far surpassing any that I had ever seen but once in my life, that *once* was, too, two years ago, and in such a case and at such an age, two years, two whole years, is a long, long while. It was a space as long as the eleventh part of my then life. Here was the present against the absent; here was the power of the eyes pitted against that of the memory; here were all the senses up in arms to subdue the influence of the thoughts; here was vanity, here was passion, here was the spot of all spots in the world, and here were also the life, the manners and the habits, and the pursuits that I delighted in; here was every thing that imagination can conceive, united in a conspiracy against the poor little brunette in England.* What then! did I fall in love at once with this bouquet of roses and lilies. Oh, by no means; I was, however, so enchanted with the place, I so much enjoyed its tranquillity, the shade of the maple trees, the business of the farm, the sports of the water and of the wood, that I stayed at it to the last possible minute, promising at my departure to come again as often as I possibly could, a promise which I most punctually fulfilled.

“Winter is the great season for jaunting and dancing,

* Who this poor little brunette was, we have not the slightest clue to guide us to the solution of the problem, neither in the history of his own life, nor from any other circumstances are we able to trace any attachment which Cobbett had formed previously to leaving England, and it is these allusions which now and then appear in his writings, which render a connected history of his life so difficult of execution.

called frolicking in America. In this province, the rivers and the creeks were the only *roads* from settlement to settlement. In summer we travelled in canoes, in winter in sleighs on the ice or snow. During more than two years, I spent all the time I could with my Yankee friends; they were all fond of me; I talked to them about country affairs, my evident delight in which, they took as a compliment to themselves; the father and mother treated me as one of their children, the sons as a brother, and the daughter, who was as modest and full of sensibility as she was beautiful, in a way much less sanguine than I was, would have given the tenderest interpretation, which treatment, I, especially, in the last-mentioned case most cordially repaid.

"It is when you meet in company with others of your own age, that you are in love matters, put most frequently to the test, and exposed to detection. The next door neighbour might, in that country, be ten miles off. We used to have a frolic, sometimes at one house, and sometimes at another. Here, where female eyes are very much on the alert, no secret can long be kept, and very soon fathers, mothers, brothers, and the whole neighbourhood looked upon the thing as certain, not excepting herself, to whom, however, I had never once talked of marriage, and I had never even told her that I loved her. But I had a thousand times done these by implication, taking into view the interpretation that she would naturally put upon my looks, appellations and acts, and it was of this that I had to accuse myself. Yet I was not a deceiver, for my affection for her was great; I spent no really pleasant hours but with her; I was uneasy if she shewed the slightest regard for any other young man, I was unhappy if the smallest matter affected her health or spirits, I quitted her in dejection, and returned to her with eager delight; many a time when I could get leave but for a day, I paddled a canoe two whole succeeding nights in order to pass the day with her. If this was not love, it was first cousin to it, for as to any criminal intention, I no more thought of it in her case, than if she had been my sister. Many

times I put to myself the questions, 'What am I at?' 'Is not this wrong?' 'Why do I go?' but still I went.

"Then further in my excuse, my prior engagement, though carefully left unalluded to by both parties, was in that thin population, and owing to the singular circumstances of it, and to the great talk that there was always about me, perfectly well known to her and all her family. (He alludes here to his engagement with the daughter of the serjeant of the artillery, as will presently appear.) It was a matter of so much notoriety and conversation in the province, (it was rather singular that the inhabitants of the province of New Brunswick had no other topic, on which to employ their conversational powers, than the love engagement of a serjeant major to a serjeant's daughter,) that General Carlton, brother of the late Lord Dorchester, who was the governor when I was there, when he about fifteen years afterwards did me the honour, on his return to England, to come and see me at my house in Duke Street Westminster, asked before he went away, to see *my wife, of whom he had heard* so much before her marriage. So that here there was no deception on my part, but still I ought not to have suffered even the most distant hope to be entertained by a person so innocent, so amiable, for whom I had so much affection, and to whose heart I had no right to give a single twinge. I ought from the very first, to have prevented the possibility of her ever feeling pain on my account. I was young to be sure, but I was old enough to know what was my duty in this case, and I ought, dismissing my own feelings, to have had the resolution to perform it.

"The last parting came, and now came my just punishment. The time was known to every body, and was irrevocably fixed, for I had to move with a regiment, and the embarkation of a regiment is an epoch in a thinly settled province. To describe this parting would be too painful, even at this distant day, and with the frost of age upon my head. The kind and virtuous father came forty miles to see me, just as I was going on board in the river. His last

looks and words I have never forgotten. 'As the vessel descended, she passed the mouth of *that creek*, in which I had so often entered with delight, and though England, and all that England contained, were before me, I lost sight of this creek with an aching heart.

"On what trifles turn the great events in the life of man. If I had received a cool letter from my intended wife, if I had only heard a rumour of any thing, from which fickleness in her might be inferred ; if I had found in her any, even the smallest abatement of affection ; if she had but let go any one of the hundred strings by which she held my heart, if any of these, never would the world have heard of me. Young as I was, able as I was as a soldier, proud as I was of the admirations and commendations, of which I was the object, fond as I then was too of the command, which at so early an age, my rare conduct and great natural talents had given me, sanguine as was my mind, and brilliant as were my prospects, yet I had seen so much of the meanesses, the unjust partialities, the insolent pomposity, the disgusting dissipation of that mode of life, that I was weary of it. I longed exchanging my fine laced coat for the Yankee farmer's home-spun, to be where I should never behold the supple crouch of servility, and never hear the lecturing voice of authority again, and on the lonely banks of their branch-covered creek, which contained (she out of the question) every thing congenial to my taste and dear to my heart, I, unapplauded, unfear'd, unenvied, and uncalumniated, should have lived, and died."

CHAPTER III.

WE are now to describe one of the most important epochs in the life of a man, and that is his marriage. Various and multifarious are the causes, from which originate the indescribable passion of love, and strange and heterogeneous are the excitements and inducements, which call our affections into play, and establish in our hearts a predilection for an individual, in whom we fancy we behold a superiority of talent, or a skill and tact in the performance of certain duties, on which the happiness of the human life is supposed to depend. The female heart is indeed a book, written in such unintelligible language, with so many faults and errors in it, that few have the courage thoroughly to peruse it, much less to undertake the herculean task of its correction. To the keen observer, however, some traits at times exhibit themselves, which present to him a clue to guide him through some part of the labyrinth, and from the display of which, he is in some measure privileged to draw his conclusion as to the existence of those, which are not exhibited. It is, however, a difficult task, and frequently attended with great fallacy, to draw the conclusion of the positive existence of a particular virtue, merely because we may have seen her act *once* in conformity to it; and on the same principle, we cannot but condemn the man, who thinks that a girl will make him a good wife, because he has seen her in the performance of a certain branch of manual labour, in strict keeping with the character of a notable housewife. We have already enumerated the virtues, which Cobbett considers to be indispensable to the formation of a good wife; and although it cannot be expected that *the* William Cobbett of twenty-one was *the* William Cobbett of sixty, in knowledge

and experience, yet, from various allusions, which we find scattered about his writings, we are in some measure privileged to infer, that even at the age of twenty-one, he had imbibed some sound opinions as to the virtues which were required in the female, in order to render the married state happy; and therefore, in the choice of a wife, *with the assistance of his knowledge of grammar*, it might have been supposed that he would have attempted to penetrate a little into the character of the female, whom he had determined to make his wife; and although history certainly does teem with the most extraordinary accounts of the particular influence, which the performance of even a trivial action by a female, has had upon the heart of the observer, yet we believe the cause, which led Cobbett to determine that the serjeant's daughter was "the very girl for him," may be classed as one of the most extraordinary, which the history of the female sex can present to us. But Cobbett shall tell it in his own words.

"When I first saw my wife, she was thirteen years old, and I was about a month of twenty-one. She was the daughter of a serjeant of artillery, and I was the serjeant major of a regiment of foot, both stationed in forts near the city of St. John, in the province of New Brunswick. I sat in the same room with her for about an hour, in company with others, and I made up my mind that she was the very girl for me. That I thought her beautiful is certain, for that I had always said should be an indispensable qualification, but I saw in her what I deemed marks of that sobriety of conduct, of which I have said so much, and which has been by far the greatest blessing of my life. It was now dead of winter, and of course the snow was several feet upon the ground, and the weather piercing cold. It was my habit when I had done my morning's writing, to go out at break of day to take a walk on the hill, at the foot of which our barracks lay. In about three mornings after I had first seen her, I had, by an invitation to breakfast with me, got up two

young men to join me in my walk, and our walk lay by the house of her father and mother. It was hardly light, but she was out in the snow, *scrubbing out a washing tub*, '*That's the girl for me,*' said I, when we had got out of her hearing. One of these young men came to England soon afterwards, and he who keeps an inn in Yorkshire, came over to Preston at the time of the election, to verify if I were the same man. When he found that I was, he appeared surprised, but what was his surprise when I told him that those tall young men, whom he saw around me, were the sons of that pretty little girl, that he and I saw scrubbing out the washing tub in the snow, in New Brunswick at daylight in the morning!

"From the day that I first spoke to her, I never had a thought of her ever being the wife of any other man, more than I had a thought of being transformed into a chest of drawers, and I formed my resolution at once to marry her as soon as we could get permission, and to get out of the army as soon as I could. So that this matter was, at once, settled as firmly as if written in the book of fate. At the end of about six months, my regiment, *and I along with it*, were removed to Frederickton, a distance of a hundred miles up the river of St. John, and which was worse, the artillery were expected to go off to England a year or two before our regiment; the artillery went, *and she along with them*, and now it was that I acted a part of a real and sensible lover. I was aware that when she got to that place, Woolwich, the house of her father and mother, necessarily visited by numerous persons not the most select, might become unpleasant to her, and I did not like, besides, that she should continue to work hard. I had saved a hundred and fifty guineas, the earnings of my early hours, in writing for the paymaster, and others, in addition to the savings of my own pay. I sent her all my money before she sailed, and wrote to beg of her, if she found her home uncomfortable, to hire a lodging with respectable people, and at any rate, not to spare the money, by any means, but to buy herself good clothes, and

to live without hard work until I arrived in England, and I, in order to induce her to lay out the money, told her I should get plenty more before I came home.

"As the malignity of the devil would have it, we were kept abroad two years longer than our time, Mr. Pitt, England not being so tame then as she is now, having knocked up a dust with Spain about Nootka Sound. Oh! how I cursed Nootka Sound, and poor bawling Pitt too, I am afraid! At the end of four years, however, home I came, landed at Portsmouth, and got my discharge from the army, by the great kindness of poor Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who was then the major of my regiment. I found my little girl a servant of all work, and hard work it was at five pounds a year, in the house of a Captain Brisac; and without saying hardly a word about the matter, she put into my hands the whole of my hundred and fifty guineas unbroken.

"Need I tell the reader, what my feelings were? need I tell kind-hearted English parents, what effect this anecdote must have produced on the minds of our children? need I attempt to describe what effect this example ought to have on every young woman who may read this history? Admiration of her conduct, and self-congratulation on this indubitable proof of the soundness of my own judgment, were now added to my love of her beautiful person.

"Now I do not say that there are not many young women of this country, who would under similar circumstances, have acted as my wife did in this case, on the contrary, I hope and do sincerely believe that there are. But when her age is considered, when we reflect that she was living in a place crowded, literally *crowded* with gayly dressed and handsome young men, many of whom really far richer and in higher rank than I was, and scores of them ready to offer her their hand; when we reflect that she was living amongst young women, who put upon their backs every shilling that they could come at; when we see her keeping the bag of gold untouched, and working hard to provide herself with but mere necessary apparel, and doing this, whilst she was

passing from fourteen to eighteen years of age; when we view the whole of these circumstances, we must say, here is an example, which, while it reflects honour on her sex, ought to have its due weight with every young woman whose eyes or ears this relation may reach."

The conviction which had been impressed upon the mind of Cobbett, when he saw his little American scouring the washing tub, that she was "the very girl for him," was fully confirmed on his further acquaintance with her, on his arrival in England; and having further ascertained the existence of other virtues in her, indispensable for the happiness of the married state, their union was consummated at Woolwich, on the 5th February 1792. At this time we do not find that Cobbett was in any active or lucrative employ, which on the score of prudence would have sanctioned his marriage; in fact, there is every reason to suppose, that he had at that period no other means of subsistence, than the money which had been returned to him by his wife previously to their marriage. He had frequently expressed his determination to settle in the United States, it was supposed in the capacity of a farmer, having during his residence there as a soldier, observed the great advantages that would accrue to an individual, who like himself had been brought up to the farming business, and where any quantity of land could be obtained at one eighth of the price which it would fetch in England. His return, however, to the United States was accelerated by two events, one occurring in England, the other in France.

It was well known that for some time previously to Cobbett leaving the army, he had been not upon the most friendly terms with some of the officers of the regiment to which he belonged, on account of some actions, as he alleged, to have been committed by them, contrary to their character as gentlemen and officers. He did not scruple to charge them with the embezzlement of stores, and of making false returns. These serious allegations were principally directed against Lieutenant Colonel Bruce, Captain Richard Powell,

Lieutenant Christopher Seton, and Lieutenant John Hall. In this affair there is something inexplicable in the conduct of Cobbett, nor does any part of the transaction redound much to his credit; indeed in his own autobiography, he is studiously silent on the subject, and it is only from the records of his times, that any information can be obtained relative to the transaction. For some private reason of his own, he required and obtained the permission that the court martial, which he demanded upon the above-mentioned officers, should be held in London; and the following strong language is used by him in his appeal to the military authorities, by whom the court martial was to be granted. "If my accusation *is* (be?) without foundation, the authors of cruelty have not yet devised the tortures I ought to endure; hell itself, as painted by the most fiery bigot, would be too mild a punishment for me."

With such sentiments operating on his mind, it was to have been supposed, that he would for his own character have been most solicitous to prosecute the charges, which he had so boldly and unceremoniously brought against the officers; and at the same time the opinion was current that he would not have ventured on so serious an undertaking, without having good and substantial grounds for his accusation. It was true, that he was himself no longer under military control, and therefore, individually speaking, the consequences of the acquittal of the officers would be of minor importance to him, but in his capacity as serjeant-major of the regiment, he had such frequent opportunities of observing all the proceedings, private and official, connected with the administration of the affairs of the regiment, that it could not for a moment be suspected that his charges, to use a parliamentary phrase, would turn out to be frivolous and vexatious.

It was on the 24th March 1792, that the court martial assembled at the horse guards, but to the surprise of every one, the prosecutor did not make his appearance. The court-martial was of course adjourned, in order that some

inquiries might be instituted about him, but on the re-assembling of the members on the 27th, still Cobbett was not to be found, and the court immediately proceeded to examine such persons as had been subpoenaed as witnesses, and they immediately delivered their sentence, that the said several charges against those officers respectively, are, and every part thereof is totally unfounded, and the court does therefore most honourably acquit the said Captain Richard Powell, Lieutenant Christopher Seton, and Lieutenant John Hall of the same. Lieutenant Colonel Bruce died before the court martial was held.

In extenuation of this most unjustifiable conduct on the part of Cobbett, it has been affirmed, that he discovered such an extent of intrigue operating against him, for the purpose of falsifying the charges, which he had brought against the officers, and also that the witnesses, whom he had collected, had been bribed to keep out of the way, that he saw that nothing but discomfiture could await him, if he persevered in his accusations. Now, from the sturdy, inflexible, and iron-bound character of Cobbett, it is not likely that either of the above circumstances would have deterred him from meeting the court martial, for if he could have proved that any secret intrigues had been carried on, or that the witnesses had been bribed, those very circumstances ought to have spurred him on to bring the delinquents to justice, as they in themselves were a strong presumptive proof of their guilt. Cobbett, however, literally skulked out of the affair in a very discreditable manner; but the officers, whom he had accused, were determined not to let him off so easily. They employed a number of emissaries to find their accuser out, but for some time their inquiries were all fruitless. At last, some information reached them, that he was living quite the life of a recluse, with his family at Farnham; and for the purpose of ascertaining the validity of the report, they selected a private in the regiment of the name of Johnson, who bore Cobbett a heavy grudge, for having obtained for him the enjoyment of a hundred lashes on his back, and him they

despatched as a spy to Farnham, and should he discover that Cobbett was living at that place, he was to return with all possible expedition to Chatham, where the regiment were then quartered, and immediate steps should be taken for his apprehension. The spy was equipped in plain clothes, but more declaratory of the beggar than of a military spy. On his arrival at Farnham, Cobbett was seated at dinner with his wife, and his father's family around him, and the beggar no sooner presented himself at the door, than instantly Cobbett's piercing eye recognized in the mendicant his late companion in arms. Cobbett suspected the intent of his journey, but he kept his presence of mind so well, that not the slightest suspicion arose in the mind of the soldier of his having been detected. He, however, now saw that it was only firmness and resolution which could save him—he bade the beggar enter—compassionated his situation—money he had none to give, but he might sit down and rest himself, and some bread and cheese and a mug of beer should be given him. In the mean time, Cobbett whispered a few words in the ear of one of his brothers, who immediately left the room.

"Hard times these," said Cobbett to his guest, "when a stout and hale young man like you are obliged to beg for a living."

"True master, I find them very hard."

"I think," said Cobbett, "you would make a good soldier; as times now are, the king wants some able-bodied men, and you would cut no bad figure as a recruit—what say you to it? there are two or three recruiting parties at Guildford, and the king's shilling would not sound badly in your pocket."

"It is but seldom," said the beggar, "that I have a shilling in my pocket."

"Come eat, man," said Cobbett, "this is some cheese of our own making, and the beer will refresh you on your road—sheer malt and hops: perhaps you can form no idea where you will sleep to night."

"I am going towards London," said the beggar, "and I shall find some barn to sleep in."

"True," said Cobbett, "there are many who rise in the morning, who do not know where they shall rest at night. Were you ever out of England?"

"Out of England, sir," repeated the beggar, "Lnd! what should a man like me do out of England."

"I should think," said Cobbett, "it would be the same to you in what country of the world you lived, for as begging appears to be your trade, you can carry it on in one quarter as well as in another. What should you think of America to try your skill in begging in?"

"I don't like America, master," said the beggar.

"How can you tell," said Cobbett, "having never been there—take my advice, go to America, get amongst the Quakers, tell them that honesty has driven you to begging; get amongst the Methodists, and tell them that you have the most unbounded faith in their loving-kindness and benevolence, and you will not require to beg much longer."

"I shall think of your advice, master," said the beggar, "but many thanks to you for the refreshment which you have given me, it is not often that I meet with such charitable folk—I must now be hunting out for a place to sleep in, for I cannot reach London to-night."

"Depend upon it," said Cobbett, "you will have a night's lodging provided for you;" and he had scarcely uttered these words, when one of his brothers returned accompanied by a functionary of the parish, the terror of mischievous boys and all other evil doers, known by the epithet of the constable.

On their entrance, Cobbett went up to his late brother soldier with an air of the bitterest resentment, and addressing himself to the constable, he said, "I charge this man with being a deserter from the 54th regiment of foot—his name is John Johnson—and as a proof that my accusation is true, he shall be immediately stripped, and the marks will be

found upon his back, of the one hundred lashes which he received, when I was serjeant major of the regiment."

In vain, Johnson protested he was no deserter, nor did Cobbett believe or care whether he were so, he saw he had a dangerous game to play, and like the desperate gambler, every thing depended on the hazard of a die. The man was stripped—the marks of his disgrace were too evident—it was all sufficient for the constable to exert his authority, and the pretended beggar was led away in custody, to be kept in durance vile until the question of his desertion could be sifted.

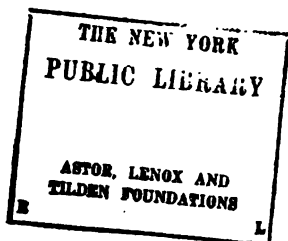
The whole, however, was a manœuvre of Cobbett's to gain some breathing time; he saw the danger which impended over him, and he knew well what would be the consequence were he to fall into the hands of his enemies, and therefore he determined without further loss of time, to leave the country with the ulterior view of settling in the United States. To this circumstance is applied the accusation of the democrats, as Cobbett styles them, that he was obliged to take a *French leave* for France, for some *night work* that he had done. Now Cobbett is in this instance a most dexterous fencer, and he shows his extreme indignation at the charge of being obliged to leave England on account of some *night work*, which he had committed, putting himself the construction upon it, that they meant he had been engaged in some robbery; for he says, "as to the charge of night work, I fear I must plead guilty, but not with my fingers, as these malicious fellows would insinuate; no, no, I am no relation to Citizen Plato; the French ladies do not call me the *garçon fendu*."

Now let us see how Mr. Cobbett really meets this question. He is accused of taking French leave from England on account of some *night work*, but what was the real expression, viz. that he had been obliged to leave England for some *ouvrage de nuit*, which he had committed, and which the compiler of *Le Maitre Anglais* construes into some *night work*; whereas consistently with the idiom of the French language, it was meant to say, that he had committed some

mean or despicable action. However, he tortures the expression into "some night work," and hence the ebullitions of his indignation.

He is also equally querulous respecting the imputation of taking "French leave" from England, for it appears to wound him so to the quick, that he considers it necessary to enter upon some explanation on the subject—"Why this 'French leave'?" he says, "did this expression escape the democrats in an unwary moment? Why French leave? Do they wish to insinuate that nobody but Frenchmen are obliged to fly from the hands of thief-catchers? The Germans, and after them the English, have applied this degrading expression to the French nation; but is it not inconsistent, and even ungrateful, for those who are in the interest, and perhaps in the pay of that magnanimous republic to talk about French leave? It is somewhat curious that this expression should find a place in a paragraph, wherein I am accused of abusing the French. The fact is, the friendship professed by these people towards the French nation, is all grimace, all hypocrisy; the moment they are off their guard, they let us see that it is the abominable system of French tyranny that they are attached to, and not to the people of that country. 'French leave!' the leave of a runaway, a thief, a Tom Paine. What could the most prejudiced, the bitterest Englishman have said more galling and severe against the whole nation? They cry against me for *abusing* the cut throats of Nantz and other places, and for accusing the demagogue tyrants of robbery, while they themselves treat the whole nation as thieves. This is the democratic way of washing out stains, just as the sweet and cleanly Sheelah washes her gentle Dermot's face with a dishclout.

However, without stopping here to inquire into the truth of the allegations brought against Cobbett at this period of his life, it is certain that he found it expedient to leave England with the utmost despatch, and in fact, in so precipitate a manner, that his wife, to whom he had been married scarcely a month, did not accompany him. He arrived in





WASHINGTON.

LONDON.

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France in March 1792, and he continued there till the beginning of the following September, passing, as he describes it, the six happiest months of his life. He found the people, amongst whom he lived, excepting those who were already blasted with the principles of the *accursed revolution*, honest, pious, and kind to excess.

There are, perhaps, few men to whom the charge of inconsistency and tergiversation will more strictly apply, than to William Cobbett; at one time, we find him the staunch advocate of kingly governments, at another, the avowed partisan of republicanism; at one time, we find him exhausting his stock of opprobrious epithets on Thomas Paine, and at another, so holding him in esteem, as to exhume his bones, and to bear them to his native country, with all the veneration with which a pilgrim would bear a relic of the cross, if he could find one, from the Holy Land; at one time, Washington was the Hannibal, the Maccenas of his country, at another, he was a traitor, bereft of all principle and honour. The view which he took of things, depended in a great degree on the country in which they were existing; for, upon the same things, that he found his eulogium, if he found them in France, he would express his utmost indignation, if he met them on the shores of America. Thus we will give a specimen of his opinion of the French, under the old regime of the bigoted Bourbons, as he found them during his short stay in France, in the year 1792; and in its proper place, we shall exhibit his opinions of those same Bourbons, when, with the assistance of British gold and blood, they were restored to the throne of their forefathers.

"People," he says, "may say what they please about the misery of the French peasantry under the old government, I have conversed with thousands of them, not ten amongst whom did not regret the change. I have not room here to go into an inquiry into the causes that have led these people to become the passive instruments, the slaves of a set of tyrants, such as the world never saw before; but I venture to predict, that sooner or later they will return to that form

of government under which *they were happy, and under which alone they can ever be happy again.*"

The determination of Cobbett to settle in the United States, was, it appears, formed before he went to France, or indeed before he quitted the army. A desire of seeing a country, so long the theatre of a war, of which he had heard and read so much; the flattering picture of it given by Reynal, as highly coloured, as it is at variance with the original; and above all, an inclination for seeing the world, led him to form the determination of expatriating himself, and of becoming a citizen, instead of a subject. "It would," says Cobbett, speaking of this resolution, "look a little like coaxing for me to say, that I had imbibed principles of republicanism, and that I was ambitious to become a citizen of a free state; but this was really the case, I thought that men enjoyed here a greater degree of liberty than in England, and this, if not the principal reason, was at least one for my going to America."

Cobbett intended to have staid in France till the spring of 1793, as well to perfect himself in the language, as to pass the winter in Paris, but he perceived the storm that was brewing in the political world; he saw that a war with England was inevitable, and it was not difficult to foresee what would be the fate of Englishmen in that country, where the rulers had laid aside even the appearance of justice and mercy. He, however, entertained an ardent desire to see Paris, and had actually hired a coach to go thither. He had even proceeded some part of the way, when he heard at Abbeville, that the king was dethroned, and the guards murdered. This intelligence made him turn off towards Havre de Grace, whence he embarked for America.

CHAPTER IV.

It was in and near Philadelphia that Cobbett began his young marriage days, he having shortly after his arrival there been joined by Mrs. Cobbett, who was glad again to visit her native land, and it is here that we pick up some of his valuable remarks on the conduct of husbands to their wives. It is the opinion of Mr. Cobbett, that a woman, nine times out of ten, is what her husband makes her; and we may add, that a man is very often what the woman makes him. Being himself, however, now a husband, the rules which he lays down on some branches of domestic economy, are far too valuable to be omitted.

His first great objection is to the keeping of servants, "for," says he, "where there are riches, or where the business is so great as to demand *help* in the carrying on of the affairs of a house, one or more female servants must be kept, but where the work of the house can be done by one pair of hands, why should there be two? especially as you cannot have the hands without having the *mouth*, and, which is frequently not less costly, inconvenient, and injurious, the *tongue*. The wife is young, and why is she not to work as well as her husband? What justice is there in wanting you to keep two women instead of one? You have not married them both in form, but if they be inseparable, you have married them in substance; and if you are free from the crime of bigamy, you have the far more burthensome part of its consequences.

"I am well aware of the unpopularity of this doctrine; well aware of its hostility to prevalent habits; well aware that almost every tradesman and every farmer, though with scarcely a shilling to call his own, and that every clerk, and

every such person, begins by keeping a servant, and that the latter is generally provided, before the wife be installed ; I am well aware of all this, but knowing from long and attentive observation, that it is the great bane of the marriage life ; the great cause of that penury, and of those numerous and tormenting embarrassments, amidst which conjugal felicity can seldom long be kept alive, I give the advice, and state the reasons on which it is founded.

“ In London or near it, a maid servant cannot be kept at an expense so low as that of thirty pounds a year ; for besides her wages, board, and lodging, there must be a fire solely for her, or she must sit with the husband and wife, hear every word that passes between them, and between them and their friends, which will of course greatly add to the pleasures of their fireside ! To keep her tongue still would be impossible, and indeed unreasonable, and if, as may frequently happen, she be prettier than the wife, she will know how to give the suitable interpretation to the looks, which, next to a certainty, she will occasionally get from him, who, as it were in mockery, she calls by the name of *master*. This is almost downright bigamy, but this can never do, and therefore, she must have a fire to herself. Besides the blaze of coals, there is another sort of flame that she will inevitably covet. She will by no means be sparing of the coals, but well fed, and well lodged as she will be, whatever you may be, she will naturally sigh for the fire of love, for which she carries in her bosom a match always ready prepared. In plain language, you have a man to keep, a part at least of every week, and the leg of lamb, which might have lasted you and your wife for three days, will by this gentleman’s sigh, be borne away in one. If you shut the door against this intruder, out she goes herself, and if she go empty-handed, she is no true christian, or at least, will not be looked upon as such by the charitable friend, at whose house she meets the longing soul, dying partly with love and partly with hunger.

“ How many thousands of tradesmen and clerks, and the

like, who might have passed through life without a single embarrassment, have lived in continual trouble and fear, and found a premature grave from this very cause, and this cause alone. When I, on my return from America in 1800, lived a short time in St. James' Street, following my habit of early rising, I used to see the servant maids at almost every house, dispensing charity at the expense of their masters, long before they, good men! opened their eyes, who thus did deeds of benevolence, not only without boasting of them, but without knowing of them. Meat, bread, cheese, butter, coals, candles, all came with equal freedom from these liberal hands. I have observed the same in my early walks and rides, in every part of this great place and its environs.

"Besides, the man and wife will live on cheaper diet and drink than a servant will live. Thousands, who never have had beer in their house, have it for the servant, who will not live without it. However frugal your wife, her frugality is of little use, if she have one of these inmates to provide for. Many a hundred thousand times has it happened, that the butcher and the butter man have been applied to, solely because there was a servant to satisfy. You cannot, with this clog everlastingly attached to you, be frugal, if you would; you can save nothing against the days of expense, which are, however, pretty sure to come. And why should you bring into your house a trouble like this? an absolute annoyance; a something for your wife to watch, to be a constraint upon her, to thwart her in her best intentions, to make her uneasy, and to sour her temper. Why should you do this foolish thing? merely to comply with corrupt fashion, merely from false shame, and false and contemptible pride. If a young man were, on his marriage, to find any difficulty in setting this ruinous fashion at defiance, a very good way would be to count down to his wife, at the end of every week, the amount of the expense of a servant for that week, and request her to deposit it in her drawer. In a short time, she would find the sum so large that she would be frightened at

the thoughts of a servant, and would never dream of one again, except in case of absolute necessity, and then for as short a time as possible.

“ But the wife may not be *able* to do all the work to be done in the house. Not able? a young woman not able to cook and wash! and mend and make, and clean the house, and make the bed for one young man and herself, and that young man her husband too, who is quite willing, if he be worth a straw, to put up with a cold dinner or a crust; to get up and light the fire, to do any thing that the mind can suggest to spare her labour, and to conduce to her convenience! Not able to do this? then if she brought no fortune, and he had none, she ought not to have been *able to marry*.

“ If indeed the work of a house were harder than a young woman could perform without pain or great fatigue; if it had a tendency to impair her health or deface her beauty, then you might hesitate; but it is not too hard, and it tends to preserve health, to keep the spirits buoyant, and of course to preserve beauty. You often hear girls, while scrubbing or washing, singing till they are out of breath, but never while they are at, what they call *working* with the needle. The American wives are most exemplary in this respect; they have none of that false pride, which prevents thousands in England from doing that, which interest, reason, and even their inclination would prompt them to do. They work not from necessity, not from compulsion of any sort, for their husbands are the most indulgent in the whole world. In the towns they go to the market, and cheerfully carry home the result; in the country they not only do the work in the house, but extend their labours to the garden; plant and weed and hoe, and gather and preserve the fruits and herbs, and this too in a climate far from being so favourable to labour as that of England, and they are amply repaid for these by those gratifications, which their excellent economy enables their husbands to bestow upon them, and which it is their universal habit to do with a liberal hand.

"But did I practise what I am here preaching? ay, and to the full extent. Till I had a second child, no servant ever entered my house, though well able to keep one, and never in my whole life did I live in a house so clean, in such trim order, and never have I eaten, or drunk, or slept, or dressed in a manner so perfectly to my fancy, as I did then. I had a great deal of business to attend to, that took me a great part of the day from home, but whenever I could spare a minute from business, the child was in my arms; I rendered the mother's labour as light as I could; any bit of food satisfied me; when watching was necessary, we shared it between us, and that *famous* grammar for teaching French people English, which has been for thirty years, and still is the greatest work of this kind throughout all America, and in every nation in Europe,* was written by me in hours not employed in business, and great part, during my share of the night watching over a sick and then only child, who, after lingering many months, died in my arms."

Without entering into a prolix discussion of the merits of *Le Maître Anglais*, which Cobbett lands as his *chef d'œuvre*, we may be allowed to ask, when and where did he acquire a competent knowledge of the French language to enable him to compile his grammar? His whole residence in France did not exceed three months, a short period indeed to make himself master of the grammar of the French language, which it would require the study of years to obtain the knowledge of. It is, however, rather a singular coincidence that in the compilation of his English grammar, he was assisted by a FRENCH-man, and in the compilation of his French grammar, by an Englishman.

* Making all allowance for the parental fondness of Mr. Cobbett, for this most famous of his literary bantlings, we are enabled to state it as a fact, that so far from his French grammar being considered at one time the greatest of all works, the use of it was positively prohibited in all the national schools and public seminaries of France, and this arose from the equalised abuse of royalty, which appears so conspicuously in the illustration of the rules.

Mr. Cobbett, in continuation of the history of his married life, says, "This was the way that we went on, this was the way that we began the married life, and surely that, which ended with pleasure, no young couple, unendowed with fortune, ought to be ashamed to do. But it is the *beginning* that is every thing in this important case, and you will perhaps have much to do to convince your wife, not that what you recommend is advantageous, not that it is right, but to convince her that she can do it without sinking below the station that she ought to maintain; she would cheerfully do it, but there are her *next door neighbours*, who do not do it, though in all other respects, on a par with her. It is not laziness, but pernicious fashion, that you will have to combat; but the truth is, that there ought to be no combat at all, this important matter ought to be settled and carefully agreed on before-hand. If she really love you and have common sense, she will not hesitate a moment; and if she be deficient in either of these respects, and if you be so mad in love as to be unable to exist without her, it is better to cease to exist at once, than to become the toiling and embarrassed slave of a wasting and pillaging servant.

"The next thing to be attended to, is your demeanour towards a young wife. Let whatever may happen to put you out of humour with others, let nothing put you out of humour with her. Let your words and looks and manners be just what they were, before you called her wife. Show your affection for her, and your admiration of her, not in nonsensical compliments, not in picking up her handkerchief or her glove, or in carrying her fan or parasol; not, if you have the means, in hanging trinkets and baubles upon her; not in making yourself a fool by winking at, and seeming pleased at her foibles, or follies, or fashions, but show them by acts of real goodness towards her; prove by unequivocal deeds, the high value that you set on her health and life and peace of mind; let your praise of her go to the full extent of her deserts, but let it be consistent with truth and sense, and such as to convince her of your sincerity. He, who is the flatterer

of his wife only prepares her ears for the hypocritical stuff of others; the kindest appellation that her christian name affords, is the best you can use, especially before faces. An everlasting, 'my dear,' is but a sorry compensation for a want of that sort of love, that makes the husband cheerfully toil by day, breaks his rest by night, endure all hardships, if the life or health of his wife demand it. Let your deeds and not your words carry to her heart a daily and hearty confirmation of the fact, that you value her health and life and happiness beyond all other things in the world, and let this be manifest to her, particularly at those times when life is always more or less in danger."

In illustration of the latter part of the foregoing passage, Mr. Cobbett says, "At one of these times to which I have just alluded, in the middle of the burning hot month of July, I was greatly afraid of fatal consequences to my wife for want of sleep, she not having, after the great danger was over, had any sleep for more than forty-eight hours. All great cities in hot countries, are, I believe, full of dogs, and they in the very hot weather, keep up, during the night, a horrible barking, and fighting, and howling. Upon the particular occasion to which I am adverting, they made a noise so terrible and unremitted, that it was next to impossible that even a person in full health and free from pain should obtain a minute's sleep. I was, about nine in the evening, sitting by the bed, 'I do think,' said she, 'that I could go to sleep *now* if it were not for the dogs.' Down stairs I went, and out I sallied in my shirt and trousers, and without shoes or stockings, and going to a heap of stones lying beside the road, set to work upon the dogs, going backward and forward, and keeping them at two or three hundred yards distance from the house. I walked thus the whole night barefooted, lest the noise of my shoes might possibly reach her ears; and I remember that the bricks of the causeway were even in the night so hot as to be disagreeable to my feet. My exertions produced the desired effect, a sleep of several hours was the consequence, and at eight o'clock in the morn-

ing, off went I to a day's business, which was to end at six' in the evening.

"Women are all patriots of the soil, and when our neighbours used to ask my wife whether all English husbands were like hers, she boldly answered in the affirmative. I had business to occupy the whole of my time, Sundays and week days, except sleeping hours, but I used to make time to assist her in the taking care of the baby, and in all sorts of things; get up, light her fire, boil her tea kettle, carry her up warm water in cold weather, take the child whilst she dressed herself, and get the breakfast ready; then breakfast, get her in water and wood for the day, then dress myself neatly and sally forth to my business. The moment that was over I used to hasten back to her again, and I no more thought of spending an hour away from her, unless business compelled me, than I thought of quitting the country and going to sea. The thunder and lightning are tremendous in America, compared with what they are in England. My wife was one time very much afraid of thunder and lightning, and as is the feeling of all such women, and indeed all men too, she wanted company, and particularly her husband, in those times of danger. I knew well of course, that my presence would not diminish the danger, but be I at what I might, if within reach of home, I used to quit my business and hasten to her, the moment I perceived a thunder storm approaching. Scores of miles have I first and last run on this errand in the streets of Philadelphia. The Frenchmen, who were my scholars, used to laugh at me exceedingly on this account, and sometimes when I was making an appointment with them, they would say, with a smile and a bow, *Sauve la tonnerre toujours, Monsieur Cobbett*.

"I never dangled about the heels of my wife; seldom, very seldom ever walked out as it is called, with her. I never 'went a walking' in the whole course of my life; never went to walk without having some object in view other than the walk, and as I never could walk at a slow pace, it would have been hard work for her to keep up with me, so that

nearly in the forty years of our married life, we have not walked out together perhaps twenty times. I hate a dangler, who is more like a footman than a husband. It is not dangle about after a wife, it is not the loading her with baubles and trinkets, it is not the jaunting her about from show to show, and from what is called pleasure to pleasure; it is none of these that endear her to you, it is the adherence to that part of the promise you have made her—'With my body I thee worship;' that is, respect and honour by personal attention and acts of affection; and remember that the greatest possible proof that you can give of real and solid affection, is to give her your time, when not wanted in matters of business; when not wanted for the discharge of some duty either towards the public or toward private persons. Amongst duties of this sort, we must of course in some ranks and circumstances of life, include the intercourse between friends and neighbours, which may frequently and reasonably call the husband from his home; but what are we to think of the husband who is in the habit of leaving his own fireside after the business of the day is over, and seeking promiscuous companions in the ale or coffee house. I am told that in France, it is rare to meet with a husband who does not spend every evening of his life in what is called a *café*, that is to say, a place for no other purpose than that of gossiping, drinking, and gaming; and it is with great sorrow that I acknowledge that many English husbands indulge too much in a similar habit; drinking clubs, smoking clubs, singing clubs, clubs of odd-fellows, whist clubs, sotting clubs; these are inexcusable, they are censurable, they are at once foolish and wicked, even in single men, what must they then be in husbands? and how are they to answer, not only to their wives but to their children, for this profligate abandonment of their homes; this breach of their solemn vow made to the former, this evil example to the latter.

"When we consider what a young woman gives up on her wedding day, she makes a surrender, an absolute surrender of all her liberty for the joint lives of the parties; she gives

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the husband the absolute right of causing her to live in what place, and in what manner, and what society he pleases ; she gives him the power to take from her and to use for his own purposes, all her goods, unless reserved by some legal instrument, and above all, she surrenders to him her person. Then, when we consider the pains which they endure for us, and the large share of anxious parental cares that fall to their lot, when we consider their devotion to us, and, how unshaken their affection remains in our ailments, even the most tedious and disgusting ; when we consider the offices that they perform, and cheerfully perform for us, when, were we left together, we should perish from neglect ; when we consider their devotion to their children, how evidently they love them better, in numerous instances, than their own lives, when we consider these things, how can a just man think any thing a trifle that affects their happiness."

In illustration of the foregoing sentiments, Mr. Cobbett relates an anecdote that happened shortly after his arrival in America. "I was going," he says, "in my gig, up the hill in the village of Frankford, near Philadelphia, when a little girl about two years old, who had toddled away from a small house, was lying basking in the sun, in the middle of the road. About two hundred yards before I got to the child, the teams, five big horses in each, of three wagons, the drivers of which had stopped to drink at a tavern, on the brow of the hill, started off, and came nearly abreast, galloping down the road. I got my gig off the road as speedily as I could, but expected to see the poor child crushed to pieces. A young man, a journeyman carpenter, who was shingling a shed by the side of the road, seeing the child, and seeing the danger, though a stranger to the parents, jumped from the top of the shed, ran into the road, and snatched up the child from scarcely an inch before the hoof of the leading horse. The horse's leg knocked him down, but he catching the child by its clothes, flung it back out of the way of the other horses, and saved himself by rolling back with surprising agility. The mother of the child, who had apparently

been washing, seeing the teams coming, and seeing the situation of the child, rushed out and catching up the child, just as the carpenter had flung it back, and hugging it in her arms, uttered a shriek, such as I never heard before, never heard since, and I hope shall never hear again, and she dropped down, as if perfectly dead. By the application of the usual means, she was restored, however, in a little while, and I being about to depart, asked the carpenter if he were a married man, and whether he were a relation of the parents of the child. He said, he was neither. 'Well then,' said I, 'you merit the gratitude of every father and mother in the world, and I will show mine, by giving you what I have, pulling out the nine or ten dollars that I had in my pocket. 'No, I thank you, sir,' said he, 'I have only done what it was my duty to do.'"

It would be tedious to follow Mr. Cobbett in his explanation of the various relations of the married state, as exemplified and practised in himself; but it ought to be known, that if Mr. Cobbett had not been a married man, the country would not have reaped the benefit of his numerous writings, which in a great degree he attributes to his having a wife and children, which in the generality of cases, would have acted in an inverse ratio. Speaking of the incentive which a wife and family hold out, even to an indolent man, to become active and industrious, Mr. Cobbett says, "Perhaps the world never exhibited a more striking proof of the truth of this doctrine, than that which is established in me, and I am sure that every one will say, without any hesitation, that a fourth part of the labours I have performed, never would have been performed, if I had not been married. In the first place, they could not, for I should all the early part of my life have been rambling and roving about, as most bachelors are. I should have had no home that I cared a straw about, and should have wasted the far greater part of my time. The great affair of home being settled, having the home secured, I had leisure to employ my mind on things which it delights in. I got rid at once of all cares, all anxieties,

and had only to provide for the very moderate wants of that home. I had leisure to attend to those early associations, which from my youth have grown up with me, until the objects themselves obtained a vigour and a power over me, which nothing could control. My love of books was one of the ruling passions of my heart;" and in the following account which he gives of his early attachment to books, the real character of the man is developed in the purest and the strongest light.

"At eleven years of age," he says, in his letter published in his *Evening Post*, to the reformers, calling upon them to raise a sum of money for the purposes of defraying the expenses, attending the securing of a seat in Parliament at the next election, and on which account he deemed it proper to enter into a refutation of the calumnies, which were daily heaped upon him by the atrocious daily press of the metropolis, and still more atrocious *Quarterly Review*, by giving a concise history of his life, he proceeds to state, "at eleven years of age, my employment was clipping of box-edgings, and weeding beds of flowers in the garden of the bishop of Winchester, at the castle of Farnham, my native town. I had always been fond of beautiful gardens, and a gardener, who had just come from the king's gardens at Kew, gave me such a description of them, as made me instantly resolve to work in those gardens. The next morning, without saying a word to any one, off I set, with no clothes, except those upon my back, and with thirteen half-pence in my pocket. I found that I must go to Richmond, and I accordingly went on from place to place, inquiring my way thither. A long day, it was in June, brought me to Richmond in the afternoon. Two pennyworth of bread and cheese, and a pennyworth of small beer, which I had on the road, and one half-penny that I had lost some how or other, left threepence in my pocket. With this for my whole fortune, I was trudging through Richmond in my blue smock frock, and my red garters tied under my knees, when staring about me, my eye fell upon a little book in a bookseller's window, on the

outside of which was written, 'THE TALE OF A TUB, Price 3d.' The title was so odd that my curiosity was excited. I had the threepence, but then I could not have any supper. In I went and got the little book, which I was so impatient to read, that I got over into a field at the upper corner of Kew gardens, where there stood a hay-stack. On the shady side of this, I sat down to read. The book was so different from any thing that I had ever read before; it was something so new to my mind, that, though I could not understand some part of it, it delighted me beyond description, and it produced what I have always considered a sort of birth of intellect. I read on until it was dark, without any thought of supper or bed. When I could see no longer, I put my little book in my pocket, and tumbled down by the side of the stack, where I slept till the birds in Kew gardens awaked me in the morning, when off I started to Kew reading my little book. The singularity of my dress, the simplicity of my manner, my lively and confident air, and doubtless his own compassion besides, induced the gardener, who was a Scotchman, I remember, to give me victuals, find me lodging, and set me to work, and it was during the period that I was at Kew, that George IV. and two of his brothers laughed at the oddness of my dress, while I was sweeping the grass plot round the foot of the pagoda. The gardener seeing me fond of books, lent me some gardening books to read, but these I could not relish after my Tale of the Tub, which I carried about with me wherever I went, and when I, at about twenty years old, lost it in a box that fell overboard in the Bay of Funda, in North America, the loss gave me greater pain, than I have ever felt at losing thousands of pounds."

It appears that Cobbett never forgot the site of the hay-stack, in the shade of which he read the Tale of a Tub; for many years afterwards having occasion to go from Chelsea to Twickenham, with his two eldest sons, he brought them back through Kew, merely for the purpose of showing them the place where the haystack stood.

CHAPTER V.

Soon after the arrival of Mr. Cobbett in America, he sent Mr. Jefferson, then Secretary of State, a letter of recommendation, which he had brought from the American ambassador at the Hague, but of the manner in which this letter was obtained, Mr. Cobbett is designedly silent. We have no data existing that he ever visited the Hague, and certainly not during the time which elapsed between his leaving England in the latter part of the year 1791, and his departure from France in March 1792; on the contrary, we have his own authority that he did not quit France at all, until his final departure for America. It may appear invidious to impugn the veracity of Mr. Cobbett on this head, more particularly as he gives the following answer received from Mr. Jefferson;

SIR,

Philadelphia, Nov. 5th, 1792

In acknowledging the receipt of your favour of the 2nd instant, I wish it were in my power to announce to you any way in which I could be useful to you. Mr. Short's assurances of your merit, would be a sufficient inducement to me. Public offices in our government are so few, and of so little value, as to offer no resource to talent. When you shall have been here some small time, you will be able to judge in what way you can set out with the best prospect of success, and if I can serve you in it, I shall be very happy to do it.

I am,

Sir,

Your very humble servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

The first observation which Mr. Cobbett makes on this letter, is, that he very thankfully received it, and that had he stood in need of Mr. Jefferson's services, he should have applied to him, but as that did not appear likely to be the case, he wrote him a letter some few months afterwards, requesting him to assist a poor man, the bearer of it, and telling him that he would look upon the assistance as given to himself. Mr. Cobbett supposed that his request was complied with, as the person was in deep distress, and was a *Frenchman*.

Some doubts, however, must have been afloat in regard to the authenticity of Mr. Jefferson's letter, or why the great anxiety which Mr. Cobbett manifests to prove it? He says that he showed the original to more than fifty gentlemen of the city of Philadelphia, and it may at any time be seen by any person of credit, who wishes a sight of it. There is something in the very wording of this passage, which throws a taint upon the transaction, for where was the necessity to show a letter to fifty gentlemen, and to have it left for the inspection of *persons of credit*, if it had not been previously declared to be of spurious origin? The very showing of it betokens a degree of suspicion of the authenticity of it, and as a further voucher of its genuineness, Mr. Cobbett shows it to a Mr. Ketlatas of New York. Mr. Cobbett does not tell us who were the captious individuals, who doubted the authenticity of the letter, and, therefore, there was no positive onus resting upon Mr. Cobbett to enter into the question at all. However, the recommendation to Mr. Jefferson is stated to have come through the medium of the American ambassador at the Hague, who at the time of Mr. Cobbett's residence in France was Mr. Adams, therefore we are left to our own conjectures as to the identity of Mr. Short, who speaks so highly of Mr. Cobbett's merit; but where he met with Mr. Short, or where he gave Mr. Short an opportunity of discovering his merit, we have no clue to guide us. As in a subsequent part of this work we shall have to refer to some very singular contradictions on

the part of Mr. Cobbett, connected with the foregoing transactions, we shall now proceed to detail his literary career in America, where he soon acquired celebrity, although not always respect, from the peculiar and frequently inconsistent principles, which he adopted.

The first circumstance of any consequence, that excited the virulence, and in some respects the vulgar abuse of Mr. Cobbett's pen was the arrival of Dr. Priestly in America in 1794. His landing, Mr. Cobbett acknowledges, was nothing to him, nor to anybody else, but the fulsome and consequential addresses sent him by the pretended patriots, and his canting replies, at once calculated to flatter the people in America and to degrade England, was a circumstance, in Mr. Cobbett's opinion, not to be looked over. He therefore considered it his business to take up the cudgels against the learned doctor, on his arrival, and he compiled his "Observations on Priestly's Emigration." A Mr. Bradford was then one of the principal booksellers in Philadelphia, but Mr. Cobbett did not at first offer him his pamphlet, on the ground, that he knew him to retain a rooted hatred against Great Britain, and, consequently, drew the conclusion that his principles would prevent him from being instrumental in the publication of any thing, that tended to unveil one of its most bitter enemies; he therefore addressed himself to Mr. Carey, who received him as booksellers generally receive authors, from whom they have no great expectations of obtaining much: he looked at the title from top to bottom, which is quite as far as some English booksellers look, and then examined the author from head to foot. "No, my lad," says he, "I don't think it will suit." This uncourteous expression roused the choler of the juvenile author. *My lad!* "God in heaven forgive me," says Cobbett, "I believe that, at that moment, I wished for another yellow fever to strike the city, not to destroy the inhabitants, but to furnish me too with the subject of a pamphlet, that might make me rich." Mr. Carey, following the example of certain English publishers, rejected the manuscript without ever looking into its con-

tents.* Nevertheless, Mr. Cobbett admits that Mr. Carey acted very honourably in the affair, as he kept the name of the author a secret, and this circumstance, considering Mr. Carey's politics, redounded greatly to his credit, and almost wiped from the author's memory, the contumelious expression of "*my lad*."

From Mr. Carey he went to Mr. Bradford, and left the pamphlet for his perusal, and the following day he called to know his determination. He hesitated—hum'd and ha'd, and wanted to know if it could not be made a little more popular, adding, that unless the author could do it, he feared that the publishing of it would endanger his windows. "More popular!" exclaimed Cobbett, "and this in Philadelphia, in the very metropolis as it might be called of a republican government, I cannot make it more popular, I have never been accustomed to accommodate myself to the caprices of a people, and especially in the excitement in which they now are." He, however, consented to the alteration of the title, which originally ran, "*The Tartuffe Detected*," or "*Observations on Priestly's Emigration*." The former was suppressed, although had Mr. Cobbett been certain that every press in the city was as little free, as that to which he was sending his manuscripts, the "*Tartuffe Detected*," would have remained, for according to the author's opinion, the person, on whom it was bestowed, merited it much better than the character so named by Moliere.

On this subject, Mr. Cobbett says, "These difficulties and these fears of the bookseller, at once opened my eyes with respect to the boasted liberty of the press. Because the laws of this country proclaim to the world, that every man may write and publish freely, and because I saw the

* In corroboration of this statement, we know a certain book now in its thirty-second edition, which was offered to the majority of the London publishers, and it was not until the author, in a fit of indignation, threw the manuscript upon the counter of a publisher, granting him permission to burn it, if he pleased, that any merit could be discovered in the work. *Es nee discere omnes.*

newspapers filled with vaunts on the subject, I was fool enough to imagine that the press was really free for every one. I had not the least idea that a man's windows were in danger of being broken, if he published any thing that was not popular. I did, indeed, see the words, *Liberty and Equality, The Rights of Man, The Crimes of Kings*, and such like in most of the booksellers' windows, but I did not know they were put there to save the glass, on the same principle that a free republican Frenchman puts a tricolour cockade in his hat, to save his head. I was ignorant of all these arcana of the liberty of the press."

Reserving to ourselves the privilege in a future stage of this work, to discuss the question, of how far Dr. Priestly was in reality deserving of the virulent abuse which Mr. Cobbett heaps upon him, and which may be ascribed more to the religious tenets of the doctor than to his political principles, although it must be admitted that the latter were highly offensive to the then enthusiastic stickler for royalty; we shall allow him for the present to deal with the learned doctor in his own peculiar manner. Thus he says, "If it had so happened, that one of the whiskey boys had ~~went~~ (verbatim from the writer of Cobbett's grammar) over to England, and had received addresses from any portion of the people there, congratulating him on his escape from a nation of ruffians, and beseeching the Lord that those ruffians might tread back the paths of infamy and ruin, and if this emigrating '*martyr*' in the cause of whiskey, had echoed back the hypocritical cant, and if he and all his palavering addresses had been detected and exposed by some good American in London, would not such an American have received the applause of all men of virtue and sense? And what would, or rather what would not have been said here against the prostituted press of Great Britain, had an English bookseller testified his fears to publish the truth, lest his windows should be dashed in?"

The work that it was feared would draw down punishment on the publisher, did not, according to the opi-

nion of Mr. Cobbett, contain one untruth, an anarchical, indecent, immoral, or irreligious expression, and yet the bookseller feared for his windows! For what? Because it was not popular enough. A bookseller in a despotic state, fears to publish a work that is too popular, and in a *free* state, fears to publish a work that is not popular enough. I leave it to the learned philosophers of the Age of Reason to determine in which of these states there is the most liberty of the press, for I must acknowledge the point is too nice for me. Fear is fear, whether inspired by a sovereign lord the king, or by a sovereign people.

It may be said that Mr. Bradford's fears were groundless, it might have been so, but he ought to have been a competent judge of the matter, he must have known the extent of the liberty of the press, better than Mr. Cobbett could have done. He might have been lying under a mistake, but that he was sincere, appeared clearly from his not putting his name at the bottom of the title page, but it stated that it was "published for the purchasers," in the same manner that the pirated editions in this country used to have the imprint of "published for the booksellers." It was not, however, according to Mr. Cobbett's opinion, till long after the public had fixed the seal of approbation on "*The Observations*," that the pamphlet was honoured with the bookseller's name; if Mr. Cobbett had said that the imprint bearing the publisher's name, did not appear until all Mr. Bradford's fears had subsided, he would have been far nearer to the truth. "It was, however, somewhat curious," says Cobbett, "that the second, third, and fourth edition should be entitled to a mark of respect, that the first was not worthy of," and at the same time in the preceding sentence he had told us, that it was owing to the public approbation which had been bestowed upon them. Speaking of these editions, Mr. Cobbett says, "Poor little innocents! they were thrown on the parish like foundlings, no soul would own them, till it was found that they possessed the gift of bringing in the pence. Another singularity is, that they got into better paper as

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they advanced. So the prudent matron changes the little dirty ragged wench, into a fine mademoiselle, as soon as she perceives that the beaux begin to cast their eye upon her.

Mr. Cobbett considers that the pecuniary concerns of an author are generally the most interesting; the majority of authors, we strongly opine, would be very much obliged to Mr. Cobbett, if he would prove to them, that it was a species of concern with which they had a great deal to do, or sometimes any thing to do at all. However, the following account which he gives of his own pecuniary concerns with Mr. Bradford, will be found highly interesting, although the concern itself was not very interesting to him. "The terms," says Cobbett, "on which Mr. Bradford took 'The Observations,' were what the booksellers call *publishing together*." I beg the reader, if he foresee the possibility of his becoming author, to recollect the phrase well, and Mr. Cobbett should have added, that should he have forgotten it, and he enters into a speculation with a publisher on a joint concern or *together*, the publishers will soon make him remember it. The *publishing together* is thus managed; the bookseller takes the work, prints it, and defrays all expenses of paper, boarding, &c. and the profits, *if any*, are divided between him and the author.* Long after the "Observations" were sold off, Mr. Bradford rendered Mr. Cobbett an account of the sales. According to this account, Mr. Cobbett's share of the profits amounted to the sum of *one shilling and sevenpence half-penny* currency of the state of Pennsylvania, or about elevenpence three-farthings sterling, quite entirely clear of all deductions whatever.

* We were once employed by a lady, who had compiled a volume of poems, and who rather than not see the effusions of her brain in print, determined, as Mr. Cobbett has it, to apply to a bookseller to *publish together*. The book appeared—the twelvemonth had elapsed, and the day of settlement was fixed. The fair authoress in imagination had already expended the whole of the profits, when the publisher handed her the account with *sixpence*, as her share of the profits. We congratulated her that she had not a few pounds to pay.

"Now bulky as this sum appears in words at length, I presume that when *ls. 7½d.* is reduced to figures, no one will suppose it sufficient to put a coat upon my back. If my poor back were not too broad to be clothed with such a sum as this, God knows, how I should bear all that has been, and is, and is to be laid on it by the unmerciful democrats. Why! *ls. 7½d.* would not cover the back of a Lilliputian, not even in rags, as they sell them here."

It was in consequence of the supposed large profits yielded by the sale of "*The Observations*," that Mr. Cobbett was taunted by his political enemies with the charge that Mr. Bradford had put a coat upon his back; an accusation which seems to have excited the acerbity of Mr. Cobbett's disposition in an extraordinary degree; and to repel the insinuation, he says, "besides, this clothing story will at once fall to the ground, when I can positively assert, that when I offered '*The Observations*' for publication, I had as good a coat upon my back, as ever Mr. Bradford, or any of his brother booksellers put on in their lives; and what is more, this coat was my own. No tailor or shoemaker ever had my name once in his books."

After the "*Observations*," Mr. Bradford and Mr. Cobbett published together no longer; when a pamphlet was ready for the press, they made a bargain for it, and the author took the publisher's note of hand payable in one, two, or three months. In order that the exact gains may be known which Mr. Cobbett derived from his publishing connection with Mr. Bradford, the following is the list of the works, and the sums in payment of each:—

	DOLLARS.	CENTS.
Observations - - - - -	0	21
Bone to gnaw, first part - - -	125	0
Kick for a Bite - - - - -	20	0
Bone to gnaw, second part - - -	40	0
Plain English - - - - -	100	0
New Year's Gift - - - - -	100	0
Prospect - - - - -	10	0
Total -	403	21

In regard to the first of these works, it is distinguished by a great deal of low scurrility, in which Mr. Cobbett indulged in his earlier writings, and from which he could not wholly wean himself in some of his later ones. As a political writer and a martyr in the cause of liberty, the character of Dr. Priestly was open to all the venomd shafts which Cobbett, in the utmost virulence of his nature, could shoot against him; but it tended not a little to lower the author of the "Observations" in the opinion of the liberal-minded, when he ventured to attack either his scientific or his private character. In regard to the former, the name of Priestly will live, when that of the author of a *hundred* volumes will be forgotten; and touching the latter, it would be difficult even for Cobbett to substantiate a charge against him. It is true, he was an ardent controversialist, but this was chiefly in consequence of his extreme simplicity and openness of character; but no man felt less animosity towards his opponents than he did, and many who entertained the strongest antipathy to his opinions, were converted into friends by his gentleness and urbanity in personal intercourse. As a man of science, he will stand high in the walk of invention and discovery, and to no one has pneumatic chemistry been so much indebted. As a metaphysician, his elucidation of Hartly's Theory of Association, his works upon Philosophical Necessity and upon Materialism, will always ensure attention. As a theologian, Dr. Priestly, who followed his convictions whithersoever they led him, passed through all changes from Calvinism to a Unitarian system, in some measure his own, but to the last remained a zealous opposer of Infidelity. Of his theological and controversial productions, those most generally esteemed are, his Institutes of natural and revealed Religion, and Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever.

At the time of Dr. Priestly's arrival in America, his name was spoken with respect and admiration by every true lover of science and erudition. William Cobbett was but then commencing his literary career, one of the humblest of the humble, and yet this pigmy in literature a

that time, attempted to wrestle with a lion, and strip him of the skin, wherewith to clothe himself.

In regard to the work itself, it was denounced in Philadelphia, as one of the most scandalous publications that ever issued from any press. To this accusation, Cobbett could not tamely submit, and in his introductory address to the Gazetteers of the city of Philadelphia, he says, "I do not know what I have done, thus to draw down your vengeance upon me. 'Tis true, I cannot like you, take towns and islands as fast as father Luke takes snuff, or erect a bridge across the Irish Channel, with as little trouble as some people can the bridge of a fiddle. I cannot put dukes (query, ducks) into iron cages, and send them to Paris for mocking birds, or chop away at the heads of kings and ministers, with as little ceremony, as if I were chopping a stick of wood, nor can I spread fleets over the ocean, and religion, peace, and plenty over a country, as quick as a surgeon's apprentice spreads a plaster. No, gentlemen, it is your province to perform feats like these, and if I am not much deceived in my own heart, I am far, very far from envying you your exalted stations. But if you are strong, be merciful: though you are the great leviathans of literature, you may suffer a poor herring to swim in the same sea, there is certainly room enough for you and me too.

"Was it well done, gentlemen, first to play at football with a poor pamphlet till you were tired, and then turn it into a shuttle-cock, and set your devils to knocking it from one hemisphere to the other? Assuredly not, for though the work itself might merit rough treatment at your hands, yet as it was in print, the natural affection that you must be supposed to bear your typographical brethren, ought to have awakened in you some compassion towards it."

It must be observed that the dissenters of England in general, were, in the opinion of the William Cobbett of 1794, a body of the most unprincipled, disloyal, revolutionary people in Europe, in fact, that they always introduced their political claims and projects under the mask of religion. It

is evident that Cobbett had no other foundation for this sweeping anathema against the dissenters, than his own prejudiced opinion; but in the conduct of Dr. Priestly, as the leader and almost founder of Unitarianism, he thought that he had found a subject on which he could write a pamphlet, and render his name celebrated from the Floridas to the Canadas, as one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of literature. Nor in his strictures on the merits, or rather in his opinion of the demerits of Dr. Priestly, was he very scrupulous in his adherence to truth. To bolster up his attack upon the doctor, he asserts, that the sermons of Dr. Priestly were the vehicles of attack upon the English constitution. When and where did Cobbett find a corroboration of this statement, in any of the sermons ever delivered by Priestly? It is true that Priestly publicly declared that the prerogatives of the crown had been increased, were increasing, and ought to be diminished, and Cobbett himself has said the same thing, *usque ad nauseam*. But the William Cobbett of 1794, was a cast-iron loyalist—nothing could bend him, and few would attempt to break him. He was also a thorough-paced calvinist, and all those who did not choose to walk in the same path with him, were fools, blockheads, revolutionists, and renegades. He had not at that time discovered, for he had not then felt the pressure of them, that the tithes of the clergy of the church of England, were one of the greatest drawbacks upon the agricultural prosperity of the country, but the individual who from his pulpit dared to promulgate the heterodox opinion, that if the clergy did receive the tenth of the produce of the land, it ought to be applied to the purpose for which it was granted, namely the maintenance of the poor, was immediately denounced by Cobbett as an enemy of religion, and the direct foe of christianity.

The two characters of Priestly and Cobbett, on the arrival of the former in America, were as directly opposite to each other as the poles, and Cobbett, who had long been looking out for a subject, on which to display the heat of his loyalty and orthodoxy, considered that a more fortunate

one could not have presented itself to him than the arrival of Dr. Priestly in America, a notorious jacobin, democrat, revolutionist, republican, and what not, all of which may be summed up in one character, afterwards assumed by Cobbett himself, namely, a radical. That the constitution of England required improvement, was acknowledged by all, except those who profited by the abuses, which for a length of time had crept into the administration of it, and it was for the correction of those abuses, that the people of England were desirous, in order that they might have their constitution in its purity and excellence as it was bequeathed to them by their ancestors; but the very principles promulgated in 1794, and repudiated and disclaimed by Cobbett, were the very same for which he himself contended in 1830—4, with all the vigour and energy of his matchless pen. From the earliest period of his political career, Cobbett has ever been like the vane on the top of the steeple, moving in all directions, and blown by every puff of wind which bears upon it. His inconsistency has been notorious, and it is scarcely possible to suppose that the individual who wrote "The Observations on Priestly's Emigration," was the same person who some few years afterwards, almost raised the standard of rebellion in his own country, in defence and support of the very principles, which in an earlier period of his life he had attacked so violently.

In regard to the diffusion of republican principles, which Cobbett lays to the charge of Dr. Priestly, the following delectable allegory is at once a proof of the principles which Cobbett then held, and is a matchless specimen of the peculiarity of his style. It is nominated "The Pot-shop," a Fable, and refers to the democratic and republican meetings, which were at that time held in England and Scotland, as it was ignorantly stated, for the total subversion of the constitution of the country.

"In a pot-shop, well stocked with wares of all sorts, a discontented, ill-formed pitcher unluckily bore the sway. One day, after the mortifying neglect of several customers,

gentlemen, said he, addressing himself to his brown brethren in general, gentlemen, with your permission, we are a set of tame fools, without ambition, without courage, condemned to the vilest uses; we suffer all without murmuring; let us dare to declare ourselves, and we shall soon see the difference. That superb ewer, which like us, is but earth; those gilded jars, vases, china, and in short all those elegant non-senses, whose colours and beauty have neither weight nor solidity, must yield to our strength, and give place to our superior merit.

"This civic harangue was received with applause, and the pitcher (chosen president,) became the organ of the assembly. Some, however, more moderate than the rest, attempted to calm the minds of the multitude, but all those which are called jordenes, or chamberpots, were become intractable; eager to vie with the bowls and cups. They were impatient, almost to madness, to quit their obscure abodes to shine upon the table, kiss the lip, and ornament the cup-board.

"In vain did a wise water-jug, some say it was a platter, make them a long and serious discourse upon the peacefulness of their vocation. Those, says he, who are destined to great employments are rarely the most happy. We are all of the same clay, 'tis true, but he who made us, formed us for different functions; one is for ornament, another for use. The posts the least important are often the most necessary. Our employments are extremely different, and so are our talents.

"This had a wonderful effect; the most stupid began to open their ears; perhaps it would have succeeded, if a grease-pot had not cried out in a decisive tone, 'You reason like an ass, to the devil with you, and your silly lessons.'

"Now the scale was turned again, all the horde of jordenes, pans, and pitchers applauded the superior eloquence and reasoning of the grease-pot; in short, they determined on the enterprise, but a dispute arose, who should be the chief, all would command, but none obey. It was then you might have heard a chatter, all put themselves in motion at once,

and so wisely, and with so much vigour were their operations conducted, that the whole was soon changed not into china—but into *rubbish*."

It might have been supposed, that the author of "The Observations," would have been content with his exhibition of Dr. Priestly in his religious, political, and private character, not so, however, he takes upon himself the office of the critic, and he proceeds to investigate the merits of the doctor's writings with respect to grammar; of course grammar takes the lead, for according to Cobbett, had he been a good grammarian, perhaps the riots in Birmingham would not have taken place, nor would he have been driven across the Atlantic to furnish Cobbett with his maiden effort in the great hemisphere of literature. He, however, quotes three passages, in which, although no ungrammatical error is to be found, still the construction is vicious; it happens, however, that in two of the three cases, the doctor is right, and Cobbett wrong. He also threatened the doctor in his "Observations," with a review of his scientific productions; for some reason, however, best known to himself, he thought it most prudent to defer that undertaking *sine die*; he, however, was perhaps guided by the prudent principle of *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. It is, however, rather singular that Cobbett never attacked an individual on account of his ignorance of grammar, or a correct construction of his sentences, than he was sure to give the individual so attacked, some good and positive reason for returning the compliment; thus, after having expatiated on the defects of the doctor in the construction of his language, Cobbett says, in enumerating the many instances of ill-usage which he experienced in England, "a farmer would not *learn* his son husbandry."

Cobbett winds up the whole of his tirade against Dr. Priestly with a second allegory, which he designates, "THE SHORT, BUT COMPREHENSIVE STORY OF A FARMER'S BULL."

"A certain troublesome fellow, who turned his back upon the church, having occasion to pass through a large farm yard in

his way to a meeting house, met with a very fine, majestic, venerable old bull, lying down at his ease, and basking in the sunshine. This bull was at times the tamest creature in the world; he would suffer the curs to yelp at him, the flies to tease him, and even some of the mischievous fellows to pull him by the horns. He was at this moment in one of his gentlest humours, ruminating upon past and present scenes of delight, contemplating the neighbouring dairy and the farm yard, where the milch cows had all their bags distended, till they were nearly running over; the calves, and the pigs, and the poultry, were frisking, and grunting, and crowing on every dunghill. The granaries were full and the barns ready to burst; there was (qy. were) many a good rick of wheat, and barley, and oats, and peas, and beans, and hay, and rye grass, and clover. The dairy was full of curds, and cream, and butter, and cheese of every kind. To be sure there was plenty for the master and his family, and all the servants, and every body belonging to the farm. Nay, those that were poor, and needy, and idle, and lazy, and sick, and proud, and saucy, and old, and infirm, and silly, were freely supplied; and even this troublesome fellow himself, notwithstanding he had long since quarrelled with the head farmer and all his best friends, and an old grudge was still existing between them, yet, upon making at any time a solemn promise to do no mischief, had free ingress, egress, and regress, in every part of the farm and the dairy, and was at liberty to help himself wherever he liked. In short, he was allowed to do anything but *skim the cream*, and set *his own mark upon the butter*.

“Now because the bull had happened to place himself across his favourite footpath, although there was plenty of room to the right and the left, nothing would serve this impudent fellow, but he must kick Old John (for that was the bull's name) out of his way; and all the world agrees that John suffered him to kick for a long while, before he showed the least inclination to rise and resent the affront. At last, however, he got upon his legs, and began to look round him, but still it was a look of contempt only, which the foolish

fellow mistook for marks of fear; and growing bolder and bolder, and hallooing the curs, and calling all his comrades to prick and goad him in the tenderest parts of his body, the bull began to threaten and roar. This was on the 14th July, one of the hottest days in summer, when somebody threw a fiery stick under his tail, at the very moment that a parcel of impudent half-witted fellows were trying to flourish a French flambeau, lighted and blazing at both ends, full in his face. No wonder, that the bull should set off with a vengeance into the street; down went the ginger-bread stalls, and the hardware shops, buckle-makers and the razor-grinders, and the dagger-makers; he even got into private houses, and in one place threw down whole baskets full of bottles and chemical glasses, crucibles and gun barrels; smash went all the jars of inflammable air, which instantly took fire, and spread all over the place; every thing went to rack and ruin; nothing was safe; even the religious houses themselves, where nothing had ever been heard, but the most pious exhortations, like those of Dr. Vicesimus Knox, to peace and harmony, and obedience to the governing powers. In short, nothing could pacify or put a stop to the fury of this poor enraged animal, till the honest master, the farmer, as quiet and as good a kind of church-going man as ever lived in the world, father of a large family, hearing of the rumpus, sent a number of his best and steadiest old servants to muzzle the beast, which had already tossed the fellow with the fiery stick over the tops of the houses, and gored him in different places. It was next to a miracle that he escaped with his life, and every body thought he had reason to be thankful that he got off so well as he did; but no sooner did he find himself safe in a *Hackney coach*, than, to the astonishment of all the world, he began to preach up his innocence, and to lodge a complaint against poor old John, who in the end suffered a great deal more than himself: some silly people pitied him, some laughed at him; others again were wicked enough to wish him at the devil; even his best friends were ashamed of him, and al-

though they, one and all, defended him as much as they could in public, there was a confounded deal of muttering and grumbling in private. 'I thought what it would come to,' says one, 'a pretty method of driving a mad bull through the church pales,' said another.

But to go on with my story. No sooner was the bull fairly muzzled, and properly confined, than the friends and neighbours on both sides, were called in to inquire into the whole affair; but there were so many contradictory stories, that it was impossible to come at the truth, how it happened, or who had first provoked him; but since it was plain to every body, that old John did the mischief, and as he was proved to be the town bull, it was at last settled, that the parish should pay all damages for not keeping him in better order.

"And here again was fresh matter for discontent: some thought it hard to pay for all the inflammable air, which had done full as much mischief as the bull. Others again objected to a monstrous out-of-the-way heavy demand for a large quantity (several reams) of foolscap paper, which had been scribbled upon and spoiled long before the affair happened. Indeed, in the opinion of some sensible persons, it was fit for nothing but kindling the fire.

"But the strangest part of the story remains to be told, for when this bustle was all over and settled, and every body thought this perverse fellow was going to take to his church, and get his living in an honest way, what did he do, but set to work bottling up his own f—s, and selling them for superfine inflammable air, and what's still worse, had the impudence to want a patent for the discovery, and indeed a good many people were deceived for a long time; but it is said, two of a trade can never agree, and so it happened here; for a brother trade one day caught him at his dirty tricks, and exposed him to the whole parish. After this, all the neighbours cried shame upon him; the women laughed; the girls, they tittered; even the little boys pointed at him, and made game of him, as he went along the streets. In short, one

Last night, when all the neighbourhood was quiet, and every body fast asleep, up he got, and set off into the next parish, bag and baggage.

"Here he trumped up a terrible story, pretended to be frightened to death, and swore and d—d; and would make the people believe as if the bull was just at his heels. The good folks (who by the by had a monstrous grudge against old John) believed him at once, and now there was the devil to do again; the women screamed and fell into fits; out ran the men and boys, with broomsticks and pitchforks and scap- ing-knives to kill the bull; but it was all sham, for poor old John was quiet at home, grazing in the meadow, up to his eyes in clover, and blue bells and daffodils and cowslips, and primroses, as contented as a lamb, and neither thinking nor caring any more about the fellow with the fiery stick, than about one of the flies, that he was brushing off with his tail.

"But the worst of all is to come yet, for while these silly people were running about, and making a hue and cry against old John, their own bull, a thirsty beast, that they had penned up in a barren spot without any pond or watering place, broke loose and did ten times more mischief than John had ever done. This made a fine laugh all round the country, every one said it served them just right, and to be sure it did, if they should have looked at home, and minded their own bull, and not run bawling about after old John."

The latter part of this allegory is rather obscure, but it alludes to the insurrection which had just then broken out in the western counties of Pennsylvania; the people in those countries refusing to conform to an excise law, laying a tax on whiskey. They took up arms, committed many violences, and several murders, and while America was in this situation, it was perfectly ridiculous to hear Americans reviling the government of Great Britain, on account of the Birmingham riots, which, according to the statement of Mr. Cobbett in his "Observations," &c., were entirely owing to Dr. Priestly, and his *et dissent* seditious meetings, which after all were

nothing more than the meetings of Englishmen, to express their approbation of the emancipation of the French nation from the odious yoke of the Bourbons.

The next work which Mr. Cobbett wrote, was "An Account of the Western Insurrection," which, of course, was somewhat occasioned by the arrival of Dr. Priestly, but unfortunately for the veracity of the historian, the rebellion had broken out before Dr. Priestly had ever set his foot on the American shores. It was, however, necessary to adduce a cause for the insurrection, and in his account of it, Cobbett labours zealously to make the American people believe that if Genet had not arrived from France, and Priestly from England, the American Congress would not have thought of imposing a tax upon whiskey. This misrepresentation, which was too bare-faced, even for the credulousness of the Americans to attach any belief to, had rather an injurious effect upon the fame of the author, and raised up against him many enemies, who would otherwise have supported him.

Nor in his account of the "Dispute with England," which followed the "Account of the Insurrection," was he guided by an improved spirit of truth and impartiality. He views all the actions of the Americans with a microscopic eye, magnifying trivial actions into deeds of vast importance, and imputing consequences to them, of which they could not possibly have been the parent. Every thing was ascribed to the democrats, no matter how remote the effect; but were the opinions promulgated by Cobbett in 1794, to be applied to himself, during the greater part of his political career in England, certain of his readers might be inclined to attach a greater proportion of truth to them, than they otherwise would have done. Thus, when Mr. Cobbett was the champion of reform in this country, had he forgotten, that in his "Summary View from 1783 to 1794," he wrote the following passage: "The bulk of *Political Reformers* is always composed of *needy, discontented men*, too indolent or impatient to *advance themselves by fair and honest means*, and too ambitious to remain *quiet in obscurity*. Few of them

are men of property, and such as are, owe their possessions to some casual circumstance, rather than to family, industry, or talents;" and this from an individual, who a few years afterwards declared that the wisdom of the country was concentrated in the reformers.

The next work that Cobbett published by Bradford, was a "Bone to gnaw for the Democrats," which of course was full of bitter invective against that particular race of politicians, and whom to debase and degrade, Cobbett musters up all the energy of his mind. It is well known that Rousseau, in his celebrated preface to *Emile*, tells a girl that if she dares to read a single line of the book, she is inevitably lost. Rousseau knew human nature too well, not to be convinced that his prohibition was the surest way of making his book read by every girl, who could get hold of it; and perhaps Cobbett was actuated by the same motive, when in his preface he prohibited any female from reading his "Bone to gnaw." The whole preface is a curious composition, and is truly characteristic of the writer. "If," says he, "you have a shop to mind, or any other business to do, I advise you to go and do it, and let this book alone, for I assure you it contains nothing of half so much importance to you, as the sale of a skein of thread, or a yard of tape. By such a transaction you might possibly make a net profit of half a farthing, a thing though seemingly of small value, much more worthy your attention than the treasures under the Stadt-house at Amsterdam, or all the mines of Peru. Half a farthing might lay the foundation of a brilliant fortune, and sooner than you should be deprived of it by this work, though it may be called my offspring, I would, like the worshippers of Moloch, commit it to the flames with my own hands.

"If you are of that sex, vulgarly called the fair, but which ought always to be called the *divine*, let me beseech you, if you value your charms, to proceed no further, politics is a mixture of anger and deceit, and these are the mortal enemies of beauty. The instant a lady turns politician, farewell

the smiles, the dimples, the roses; the Graces abandon her, and Age sets his seal on her front. We never find Hebe, goddess ever fair and ever young, chattering politics at the table of the gods, and though Venus once interposed in behalf of her beloved Paris, the spear of Diomed taught her to tremble at the name of arms. And have we not an example of recent, very recent date, I mean that of the unfortunate Mary Wolstonecroft? It is a well-known fact, that when that political lady began the Rights of Woman, she had as fine black hair as you would wish to see, and that before the second sheet of her work went to press, it was turned as white, and a great deal whiter than her skin. You must needs think I have the ambition common to every author, that is to say, to be read, but I declare that sooner than bleach one auburn ringlet, or even a single hair, sooner than rob the world of one heavenly smile, I would with pleasure see my pamphlet torn up to light the pipes of a democratic clab, or burnt like the "Political Progress," by the hands of a Scotch hangman, or even loaded with applauses by the Philadelphia Gazette.

"It is a little singular for an author to write a preface to hinder his work from being read, but this is not my intention, all I wish to do is, to confine it within its proper sphere. I am aware that my sincerity in this respect may be called in question, and that malice may ascribe to me motives that never entered my thoughts, but of this I am totally regardless; my work answers to its title, and consequently nobody but the democrats can have any thing to do with it, nor does it court their approbation; I throw it in amongst them, as amongst a kennel of hounds; let them snarl and growl over it, and gnaw and slaver it, the more they wear out their fangs this way, the less dangerous will be their bite hereafter."

In this work of a "Bone to gnaw," is contained the memorable dream of Cobbett, which is related in the following manner:—"In the month of August last, I believe it was on the 10th or 11th day, I retired to rest about 11 o'clock, but

the heat and mosquitoes together prevented me from falling asleep till, the watchman had been round for three. Soon after this, I dropped off for about an hour and a half, during which time my fancy sported in the following dream:—

“I thought I was walking up Market-street, by the side of old William Penn, the founder of the city, who told me, I thought he was come upon earth again to see if his descendants, and those of his companions, continued to walk in the paths of peace and integrity. I thought I asked him with a kind of sneer, whether he had not found things surpassing his expectation, upon which the old man, after a heavy sigh, told me a long deal about freeing blacks with one hand, and buying whites with the other, about godly malice and maple sugar, ‘precious hypocrites!’ (these were his very words,) Brissot and Warner Miffin, &c. &c. &c. to the end of the chapter.

“Before the good old man had finished his story, which, by the by, was a pretty tough one, we were, I thought, got to the top of Upper Market-street, where we were stopped by a monstrous crowd of people, that not only blocked up the way, but filled all the fields for a great way out; I thought, however, that we wedged along amongst the crowd for a good while, till at last we could penetrate no further. Our ears were assailed from all quarters with the firing of cannon, sounding of trumpets, beating of drums, ringing of bells, singing, whooping, hallooing, and blaspheming, as if hell itself had broken loose. Yet the crowd seemed not to express the least fear. Joy seemed seated on every countenance, and expectation in every eye. We had not waited long in this situation when two banners at some little distance, announced the approach of a procession, at once the most ludicrous and idolatrous that eyes ever beheld. I thought there was a sort of pyramid made of paper, with a red nightcap upon the top of it, and carried by two Americans and two foreigners, all of whom, like the pyramid, were dressed in red nightcaps. Round the pyramid marched, I thought, a bevy of virgins in

white robes, each wearing a crown and cestus tricolour, and bearing a garland in her hand, and (what stuff do we dream of,) I thought these nymphs were ushered by nine or ten priests; whose only mark of distinction was a nosegay of *straw* tied round with a ribbon; I thought that behind these came a company of artillery with their cannon, and that they were followed by a gang of music. Then I thought, followed the two banners above mentioned, one of them having for arms, the imperial eagle, just as it is seen on the standards of the holy Roman empire; the other was so black and dirty, that I could not distinguish its armory; it seemed, I thought, rather the ensign of the infernal regions than of any earthly nation. After this, I beheld, and lo! a great multitude that no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, and colours. I thought, however, I could distinguish amongst them (but it is all a dream) the chiefs of the state of Pennsylvania.

“I thought we followed this antic show into a spacious enclosure, where on an altar, not of burnished gold, but of deal boards, stood the goddess, the object of the feast. She was dressed like the Cyprian queen, when she received the prize from the Idalian shepherd, that is to say—in her skin; in her right hand, she held a staff, mounted with a nightcap, and in her left, a dagger, on her head she had a cap decorated in appearance with pendant lilies, but upon closer examination, I thought I found them to be real bells. This discovery led me to perceive, that I had committed an error with respect to the identity of her person; for hearing that her worshippers were called *casmus*, I concluded she was the goddess Cloacina, and in this opinion I was in some measure confirmed by seeing her worshipped with nosegays of straw, but the cap and bells set me right at once. In short, I saw plainly it was the goddess, which I thought was besides fully proved by the behaviour of the crowd. But still the dagger remained unexplained for we all know, that that weapon is not amongst the insignia of that goddess. In this perplexity

happened to cast my eyes downward, and on the front of the altar I thought I saw the following phrase of Voltaire, '*Sous ma tutelle, les singes agacent les Tigres.*'

"The priests, I thought, were ranged round the altar, offering up their nosegays, and invoking the assistance of the goddess, while the air rang with hallelujahs. The invocation was no sooner ended, and the benediction given by the high priest, than the whole, not excepting the chiefs, I thought, of Pennsylvania, began dancing and capering *à la canibale* round the altar, at the same time deafening the very firmament with their cries.

"Here, my venerable companion, who had been very uneasy during the whole of the scene, would absolutely stop no longer, and to confess a truth, I confess, I began to feel a good deal uneasy myself. I thought we got with some difficulty to the outside, and seeing a young fellow of a milder aspect than the rest, the old man ventured to ask him how long these people had been pagans. I thought the fellow gave him a look of infinite contempt and answered, 'I see you are a superstitious old fool, that knows nothing of the luminous close of the eighteenth century. Why, you stupid old dog, we are all christians yet, what you have seen to-day is only a jubilee to celebrate the downfall of our best friends, and the massacre of nine hundreds of our neighbours by the hands of forty thousand two-legged monsters.'

"As he spoke these last words, I thought his person, which was that of a genteel, gentle American, assumed the hideous form of the terrific Medusa. His fingers were transformed into the claws of a tiger, the fangs of a boar hung down his foaming jaws, his eyes became a glaring ball, and his hair a bed of snakes, curling round his skull and hissing destruction. The poor old man, though immortal, was appalled, and rushed into the grave to hide himself from the petrifying sight. I uttered a shriek and awaked, but awaking was very far from putting an end to my fright, still the noise continued, and still was I stiffened with horror, unable to determine, whether it was a dream or not. My voice, however,

had alarmed the family, and oh! how glad I was to find that the noise I heard was nothing, but that of the French and our own citizens assembled to celebrate the 'Holy Insurrection' of the 23rd Thermidor, (10th August, old style)."

The foregoing, though called a dream, is any thing but a dream, it is an allegorical description of the fête, which was given in Philadelphia on the 10th August, but an account of which, Mr. Cobbett, from prudential motives declined to give circumstantially.

In almost every page of the "Bone to gnaw," the characteristic inconsistency of Cobbett displays itself, his general aim appears to be to fight the battles of the English against the Americans; and yet speaking of the former, he says, "the English are no favourites of mine; I care very little if their island were swallowed up by an earthquake, but truth is truth, and let the devil deny, if he can, that *this is truth*." In this work, he also attempts to prove that England as a country was in a high state of prosperity, and that not the slightest indication appeared of an approaching dissolution of the British empire, and yet, in two pages afterwards we read "that every one *knows* that England is on the verge of a national bankruptcy."

The Monthly Review of England now comes in for a share of Mr. Cobbett's abuse, which he is always sure to heap upon every one who differs from him in politics. At the time when the "Bone to gnaw" was published, a person of the name of Smith, styled by Cobbett, a malignant democrat, had just undertaken a periodical publication, which he entitled The American Monthly Review, but which consisted in reality of nothing more than a selection of articles from the London Monthly Review.

In the second number of the American Review, "the Bone to gnaw" was reviewed, and by no means with that respect and approbation which, in the opinion of Mr. Cobbett, it ought to have been. By way of retaliation, on the supposition that the editor of the American Review had given him a *bite*, he was determined to give him a kick, and

a rambling tract made its appearance, entitled "A Kick for a Bite," but which Mr. Cobbett says he never should have written, but with the design of decrying the republication of a most detestable British publication.

The first part of the "Kick," &c., is occupied in *learning* Mr. Smith, the editor, grammar, and Mr. Cobbett then proceeds to correct the construction of his sentences, some of which he certainly improves, and others should have been left without any comment upon them. It is, however, in this tract that we become acquainted with the cause of one of Mr. Cobbett's ears being longer than the other.

"You seem, my dear sir," addressing himself to the reviewer, "to be very anxious to scrape an acquaintance with me; observe then, if you should see a person with one ear hanging down upon his cheek like the ear of an old sow, that is Peter Porcupine, at your service; for you must know, when I was a little boy at school, this very self same phrase 'simple *laughter* are the means,' happened to come blundering into my translation, for which the enraged brutal pedagogue, with half a score dunces and numskulls, seized me by the unfortunate ear, and swinging me in the air as huntsmen do young hounds, to see if they are (?) of the right breed, left me in the condition above described."

Mr. Cobbett's concerns with his publisher, Bradford, closed with "The Prospect from the Congress Gallery," and as the separation gave rise to many conjectures and reports, the following may be considered as a true explanation of the whole affair.

Mr. Cobbett, in undertaking the editing of "The Prospect," proposed to make a collection of the debates, with here and there a note by way of remark or elucidation. It was not his intention to publish it in numbers, but at the close of the session, in one volume; but Mr. Bradford fearing a want of success in that form, determined on publishing in numbers. This, however, was without the approbation of Mr. Cobbett, as was also a subscription that was opened for the support of the work. When about half a number was finished, Mr.

Cobbett was informed that many gentlemen had expressed their desire, that the work might contain a good deal of original matter, and few debates. In consequence of this, he was requested to alter his plan, to which he agreed, but added that he would by no means undertake to continue the work.

The first number, but not compiled by Mr. Cobbett, was published, and its success led Mr. Bradford to press for a continuation. His son offered Mr. Cobbett a hundred dollars a number in place of eighteen, and he would have accepted the offer, had it not been for a word that escaped him during the conversation. He observed that their customers would be much disappointed, for that his father had *promised a continuation, and that it should be made very interesting*. This slip of the tongue opened Cobbett's eyes at once. What! a bookseller undertaking to promise that I would write, and that I would write too to please his customers! "No," says Mr. Cobbett, "if all his customers, if all the Congress, with the President at their head, had come and solicited me, nay, had my life depended on a compliance, I would not have written another line."

Mr. Cobbett was at this time fully employed, having a translation on his hands for Mr. Moreau de St. Mory, as well as another work, which took up a great deal of his time; so that he believes that he would not have published "The Censor," had it not been to convince the customers of Mr. Bradford, that he was not in his pay, that he was not his puppet, nor he, the showman; that what merits or demerits his writings might have, no part of them fell to his share.

When Mr. Bradford found that Mr. Cobbett was preparing to publish a continuation of "the Remarks on the Debates," he sent him the following note:—

SIR,

Send me your account, and a receipt for the last publication, and your money shall be sent you by

Yours, &c.

Phila. April 22, 1796.

THOMAS BRADFORD.

To this Mr. Cobbett returned the following answer:—

SIR,

Philadelphia, 22d March, 1796.

I have the honour to possess your laconic note, but upon my word I do not understand it. The requesting of a receipt from a person before any tender of money is made, and the note being dated in April, in place of March; these things throw such an obscurity over the whole, that I defer complying with its contents till I have the pleasure of seeing yourself.

I am

Your most obedient humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

This brought a second note in these words:—

SIR,

Finding you mean to pursue "The Prospect," which you sold to me, I now make a demand of the *fulfilment* of your contract, and if honour does not prompt you to *fulfil* your engagement, you may rely on an *application* to the laws of my country, and I make no doubt I shall there meet you on such grounds as will convince you I am not to be trifled with.

I am yours, &c.

March 22, 1796.

THOMAS BRADFORD.

Here ended the correspondence, except that it might be said to be continued for about five minutes longer by a hearty laugh, which Mr. Cobbett bestowed on this correct and polite billet.

Cobbett here says, "that it is something truly singular, that Mr. Bradford should threaten me with a prosecution for not writing, just at the moment when others threatened with a prosecution for writing. It seemed a little difficult to set both at defiance, yet this was done, by continuing to write, and by employing another bookseller."

Bradford, however, as well as his son, were a source of great annoyance to Cobbett, and they certainly descended to particulars, in which they were by no means warranted. An unpardonable affront was, however, given to Cobbett,

by Samuel J. Bradford, who stigmatizes his writings by the uncourteous epithet of *dirty water*. "That I have made good use," says Bradford, "of the British corporal, I have little doubt, *dirty water* will quench fire."

This "dirty water" was a bitter pill, which Cobbett could not swallow, and it roused all the natural acerbity of his disposition, which vented itself in a tirade of abuse, that few men would wish to undergo. "Now," says Cobbett, "how will Bradford reconcile calling my writings 'dirty water,' with his zeal to spread them abroad, and with the awkward flattery, he and his family used to bore my ears with. Had I believed half what they told me, I should long ago have expired in an ecstasy of self-conceit. When the "Observations on Priestly's Emigration" were published, Bradford and his wife took great care to inform me of the praises bestowed on them by several gentlemen, Dr. Green in particular, and to point out to me the passages, that gave the most pleasure. The *first* "Bone to gnaw," gave universal satisfaction; they told me it was read in all companies, by the young and old; and I remember that the sons told me, on this occasion, how delighted their uncle, the late attorney general was with it, and that he said, he should have loved me for ever, if I had not been so severe upon the French. Before the "New Year's Gift" appeared in public, Bradford took me, he had read some few pages of it to two of the senators, who were mightily pleased with it, and laughed very heartily. While the father was plying me with his senators, the sons played upon me from the lower house. Several of the members, their intimate friends, wanted to be blessed with the sight of me; one wanted to treat me to a supper, another wanted to shake hands with me, and a third wanted to embrace me.

"If my works were *dirty water*, why did he threaten to prosecute me for not continuing them? *Dirty water* is not a thing to go to law about. Did ever any body hear of a man's prosecuting another, because he refused to bring him *dirty water* to throw on the public?

'After all this praising, and flattering, and menacing, my poor labours are good for nothing. The writings, which had given so much pleasure to Dr. Green, that the attorney general would have loved me for ever for, that charmed all sexes and all ages, that made grave senators shake their sides with laughter, and Congress men want to treat and hug me, that were so highly approved of by the officers of government, that it was an *honour* to publish, and that I was threatened with a prosecution for not continuing, these very writings are now become *dirty water*! say rather, *sour grapes*!

"With respect to the motives that gave rise to my pamphlets, I have already stated them, and as to their literary merit, though I have no great opinion of it, yet after having heard them ascribed to Mr. Bond, Mr. Thornton, secretary to the English ambassador, Dr. Andrews, the Reverend Mr. Bisset, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Sedgwick, Dr. Smith, and in short to almost every gentleman of distinguished talents amongst the friends of the Federal government, it would be mere grimace for me to pretend that they have no merit at all. It is somewhat singular that the democrats never pitched upon any such low fellow as the author; their suspicions always alighted amongst gentlemen of family and gentlemen of learning. It is therefore too late to decry my performances as tasteless and illiterate, now it is discovered that the author was brought up at the plough tail, and was a few years ago a private soldier in the British army."

It was, however, the letter of Samuel F. Bradford, that principally excited the violence and abuse of Cobbett, and of this Bradford, he speaks, "This hatter turned printer, this sooty-fisted son of ink and urine, whose heart is as black and as foul as the liquid in which he dabbles, must have written, if he did write, at the special instance and request of his father, for the *lampblack* says, 'A father's wish is a law with me.'"

Amongst the charges, however, that the Bradfords brought against Cobbett, and the truth of which he did not deny, were, that he was in the act of *indirectly* puffing his own

work, and they substantiate their charge, by producing the copy of a letter which Cobbett sent to the Aurora for insertion, under the signature of a correspondent, *against* the second part of the "Bone to gnaw;" Cobbett, however, attempts to extricate himself out of this dilemma, by affirming that the puff indirect, was written by him at the express desire and request of Bradford himself, who repeatedly asked him to write a puff for that work, and to which Cobbett at length complied, not, however, as he says, that he was unwilling to do it *at first*, but that he could with difficulty spare time to write it.

It would prove a difficult task to show the moral fitness of the act, and therefore Cobbett in his defence has recourse, like a pleader in a knotty point, to precedents, and certainly his authorities are very high, being no other than Addison, Philipps, and Pope. It is well known that the epilogue to "Philipps' Distressed Mother," was written by Addison, who inserted a letter *against it* in the Spectator, for the sake of giving it a triumphant answer. But the puff indirect of Pope, is more exactly in point with Cobbett's. He drew a comparison of Philipps' performance with his own, on which, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though Pope has himself always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philipps. The design of aggrandizing himself, he disguised with such dexterity, that though Addison discovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of displeasing Pope by publishing his paper. Now Cobbett thought that what three such luminaries in the literary hemisphere had done, he might also do, especially, as at that time, he placed so much confidence in Bradford, as not to entertain the slightest suspicion that he would betray the secret. This breach of confidence was certainly unpardonable, for it must be admitted, that there are many transactions, which, although we may not look upon as criminal, yet, nevertheless we should not wish to have them made public. A lady in love with a handsome young fellow, may make indirect advances by the aid of a third person. This is certainly no crime; but should

the confident preserve one of her letters, and afterwards publish it, such confident ought to meet with general detestation. This is a parallel case so far, but when to this we add the aggravating circumstance of the confident being the original adviser of the correspondence, we are then at a loss for words to express our abhorrence. Bradford, however, not only divulged what was communicated to him under the pledge of secrecy, and at his own pressing request, to serve him, but he was guilty of this scandalous breach of confidence towards a man, to whom he was perhaps indebted that he was not the tenant of a prison; "after all this," Cobbett says, "will any one say that I am to blame, if I expose this stupid, this mean, this shabby, this treacherous family? do they deserve any quarter from me? No, Peter, no."

The following will convey some idea of the mode of attack adopted by the Bradfords against Cobbett; and his own method of meeting the attack and repelling it, is in perfect keeping with his character. Thus, in one of his "Political Censors," he says, "They, (the Bradfords,) say I lived in a garret, when first they knew me. They found me tenant and sole occupier of a very good house, No. 81, Callow Hill. They say I was poor, and *that lump of tallow* streaked with lampblack, that calls itself Samuel F. Bradford, has the impudence to say that my wardrobe consisted of my old regimentals, &c. At the time the Bradfords first knew me, I earned about 140 dollars a month, and which I continued to do for about two years and a half. I taught English to the most respectable Frenchmen in the city, who did not shuffle me off with notes as Bradford did. With such an income I leave the reader to guess, whether I had any occasion to go shabbily dressed. It would look childish to retort here, but let any one go and ask the old women in Callow Hill Street, *about the rent in old Bradford's yellow breeches.*"

Another passage in Samuel Bradford's pamphlet gave great offence to Cobbett, which is a transcription from the first "Bone to gnaw," in which Cobbett is made to say, that the *people of America* were aristocrats and royalists in

their hearts, and only wore the mask of hypocrisy to answer their own purposes. Cobbett meets this charge in the following ludicrous manner, "If," says he, "young urine will but agree to leave out *people of America*, and supply its place with *family of goosy Tom Bradford*, I will own the sentence for mine, and I will tell the public into the bargain, how I came to make use of it. I entered Bradford's one day, and found him poring over an old book on *heraldry*, I looked at it, and we made some remarks on the orthography. In a few minutes afterwards he asked me, if I knew any thing of the *great Bradford family* in England? I replied, no. He then told me that he had just seen a list of new peers, (English peers! reader! valuable souls!) amongst which was a *Lord Bradford*, and that he suspected he was a branch of the family. As the old women say, you might have knocked me down with a feather, I did not know which way to look. The blush that warmed my cheek for him then, renews itself as I write. He dunned my ears about it half a dozen times, and even went so far as to request me to make inquiries about it, when I wrote home. It was on this most ludicrous occasion that I burst out, 'Ah, d—n you, I see you are all aristocrats and royalists in your hearts, yet your republicanism is nothing but hypocrisy.' And I dare say the reader will think I am half right. I wonder what are the armorial signs of the Bradford family. The crest must be a goose of course. Instead of scollops and gueules, he may take a couple of printers' balls, a keg of lampblack, and a jorden. His two great bears of sons, may serve as supporters, and his motto may be—*One shilling and sevenpence halfpenny for a Pamphlet*. All this will form a pretty good republican coat of arms."

In this pamphlet of Bradford's, Cobbett is very uncere-
moniously called a *hypocrite*, a *needy hireling*, and a *coward*, but Cobbett says, "as to the last term which young lamp-black has conferred upon me, it is the blustering noise of a poor, timid, trembling cock, crowing upon his own dunghill. I hurl the coward back to his teeth, with the addition of fool

and scoundrel. I think that is interest enough for one fortnight."

A wholesale dealer of scandal is another character which was bestowed upon Cobbett; but Cobbett says, "if I had published or made use of one hundredth part of the anecdotes they supplied me with, I should have set the whole city by the ears. I'll just mention one or two, which will prove that I am not the first old acquaintance, that Bradford has betrayed. He told me of a *judge*, who, when he presented him with an old account, refused to pay it, as it was *setting a bad example*. Ah! righteous judge! a second Daniel! He told me that he went once to breakfast with Mr. Dallas, now Secretary of the State of Pennsylvania, and that Dallas said to him, 'by G—d Tom we have no *sugar*, and I have not a farthing in the world.' So says my Lord Bradford. 'I put my hand in my pocket and tossed the girl a quarter of a dollar, and she went out and got some.' Another time, he said, Mr. Dallas' hair dresser was going to sue him for a few shillings, when he, like a generous friend, stepped in and put a stop to further proceedings by buying *the debt at a great discount*. These anecdotes he wanted me to make use of; but these, as well as all the others he furnished me with, appeared to me to be brought forth by private malice, and therefore I never made use of any of them, though I must confess that in one particular, this was a very great act of self denial."

The pride of Cobbett was also not a little wounded by a statement sent forth by Bradford, that *he did not know how to write*, and his manuscripts had all to be amended and corrected. This was indeed wounding him in the tenderest part, but he satisfactorily proved that the statement had no foundation in truth, and he adduces two instances in which he would not yield to the requisition of the Bradfords to amend his manuscript or to allow it to be amended by others. The first case was in the case of Martin's Law of Nations, which he translated from the French, for Bradford, and ostensibly dedicated by him to General Washington,

although the dedication was in reality written by Cobbett. When a proof of it was taken off, old Bradford proposed a fulsome addition to it, "*give the old boy a little more oil*," said he. "This greasing, however, I refused to have any hand in, and notwithstanding *I did not know how to write* and was a *needy hireling*, my Lord and Master Bradford did not think to make any alteration, though I could not have had any reasonable objection, as it was signed with his name. The other case was in regard to the "New Year's Gift." Speaking of the French minister, I made use of the following words, 'not that I doubt his veracity, though his not being a *Christian*, might be a trifling objection with some weak-minded people.' It was proposed by Bradford to change the word *Christian* for *Protestant*. Bradford himself came with the proof sheet to prevail on me to do this, but by referring to the "New Year's Gift," it will be found that the word *Christian* was retained."

Mr. Cobbett sums up the account of his literary career with the following remarks, and we possess too much confidence in his judgment and discernment, to call into question the truth of his remarks. "Indeed," says he, "these booksellers in general are a cruel race. They imagine that the soul and body of every author that falls (fall) into their hands is (are) their exclusive property. They have adopted the bird-catcher's maxim 'a bird that can sing and won't sing, ought to be made to sing.' Whenever their devils are out of employment, the drudging goblin of an author must sharpen up his pen, and never think of repose till he is relieved by the arrival of a more profitable job; then the wretch may remain as undisturbed as a dormouse in winter, while the stupid dolt whom he has clad and fattened, receives the applause." We think it but right to state that Mr. Cobbett is speaking of the *American* booksellers, for we are thoroughly convinced that no one who has had any thing to do with the London booksellers can say that his strictures apply to them.

One of the most serious charges, that was at this time

brought against Mr. Cobbett was, that he was in the pay of the British government, and consequently that the epithet of hireling was not inapplicable to him, and the gravamen of this charge rested on the circumstance, as reported, that he was frequently visited by a certain agent, meaning Mr. Bond; to this Mr. Cobbett answers, that he never saw Mr. Bond but three times in his life, and then he had-business with him as the interpreter of Frenchmen, who wanted certificates from him, in order to secure their property in the conquered colonies. "I never," he says, "in my life spoke to, corresponded with, or even saw to my knowledge either of the British ministers or any one of their retinue.

"It is hard to prove a negative," continues Mr. Cobbett; "it is what no man is expected to do; yet I think I can prove that the accusation of my being in British pay is not supported by one single fact, or the least shadow of probability.

"When a foreign government hires a writer, it takes care that his labours shall be distributed, whether the readers are all willing to pay for them or not. This we daily see verified in the distribution of certain blasphemous Gazettes, which though kicked from the door with disdain, flies (fly) in at the window. Now, has this ever been the case with the works of Peter Porcupine? were they ever thrust upon people in spite of their remonstrances? Can Mr. Bradford say, that thousands of these pamphlets have ever been paid for by any agent of Great Britain? Can he say, that I have ever distributed them? No, he can say no such thing. They had at first to encounter every difficulty, and they have made their way supported by public approbation and that alone.

"I have every reason to believe that the British consul was far from approving of some at least of my publications. It happened to be in a bookseller's shop unseen by him, when he had the goodness to say that I was a *wild fellow*, on which I shall only observe, that when the king bestows on me about five hundred pounds sterling a year, perhaps I may become a *tame fellow*, and hear my master, my countrymen,

my friends, my parents belied and execrated without saying one single word in their defence.

“ Had the ministers of Great Britain employed me to write, can it be supposed that he would not furnish me with the means of living well, without becoming the retailer of my own works? Can it be supposed that he would ever have suffered me to appear on the scene? It must be a very poor king that he serves, if he could not afford me more than I can get by keeping a book shop. An ambassador from the king of the gipsies, could not have acted a meaner part. What! where was all the gold of Pitt? That gold, which tempted, according to the democrats, an American envoy to sell his country, and two thirds of the senate to ratify the bargain; that gold, which according to the convention of France has made one half of that nation cut the throats of the other half; that potent gold could not keep poor Peter Porcupine from standing behind a counter to sell a penknife or a quire of paper.

“ The notion of my being in British pay, arose from my having now and then taken upon me to attempt a defence of the character of that nation, and of the intentions of its government towards the United States. But have I ever teased my readers with this, except when the subject necessarily demanded it? And if I have ever given way to my indignation, when a hypocritical political divine attempted to degrade my country; or when its vile calumniators called it ‘ An insular Bastile,’ what have I done more, than every good man in my place would have done? What have I done more than my duty; than obeyed the feelings of my heart? When a man hears his country reviled, does it require that he should be paid for speaking in its defence?

“ Besides, had my works been intended to have introduced British influence, they would have assumed a more conciliating tone. The author would have flattered the people of this country, even in their excesses; he would have endeavoured to gain over the enemies of Great Britain by smooth and soothing language; he would ‘ have stooped

to conquer; he would not, as I have done, rendered them hatred for hatred, and scorn for scorn.

"My writings, the first pamphlet excepted, have had no other object, than that of keeping alive an attachment to the constitution of the United States, and the inestimable man, who is at the head of the government, and to paint in their true colours, those who are the enemies of both; to warn the people of all ranks and descriptions, of the danger of admitting among them the anarchical and blasphemous principles of the French revolutionists, principles as opposite to those of liberty as hell is to heaven. If, therefore, the pamphlets were written at the instance of a British agent, that agent must certainly deserve the thanks of all the real friends of America."

In January 1796 appeared the first number of the "Political Censor," the subjects of which are chiefly confined to American politics, and in which, of course, the democrats come in for their full share of abuse.

The "Bloody Buoy," appeared in the following month, the object of which was to give the people of America, a striking and experimental proof of the horrible effects of anarchy and infidelity. The materials for this work were collected from different publications, but the avowed authority of the author is L'Abbé Barruel, a man steeped to the very eyes in fanaticism, bigotry, superstition, and prejudice. A more fallacious authority could not have been selected, for he had sounded the tocsin of alarm all over Europe, and every monarch saw his throne crumbling to ruins. This was the man who saw in Weishaupt, the founder of the illuminati of Germany, the destroyer of all the monarchical governments of Europe; and in the freemasons, he beheld the subverters of every sound principle of social order and religion. Educated himself in the gloom and bigotry of a monastery, he saw in the attempts of the French people to emancipate themselves from the galling chain of their royal tyrants, a decided change in those systems of government, from which hitherto had flowed nothing but corruption, injustice, and oppression.

The same doctrines that Barruel promulgated against the illuminati, and the patriots, who brought about the French revolution, were fulminated against the freemasons of Europe by Professor Robinson, of Edinburgh, who, although he discovered that the fanaticism and superstition of Barruel, would not exactly suit the latitude either of Edinburgh or London; yet he contrived to raise such an alarm in the breasts of the people, in regard to the insidious and revolutionary designs of the freemasons, that they became as it were for a time a branded community; and to belong to a lodge of freemasons, was at that time tantamount to being considered an enemy to royalty and social order.

Cobbett says, that he foresaw that the cant of modern patriotism would be poured forth against him, on the occasion of his publication of the "Bloody Buoy." He was aware that he should be represented as an enemy of the French nation and of the cause of liberty. But to this charge, he says, he will answer beforehand, with the frankness of a man, who thinks no freedom equal to that of speaking the truth. He avers, that he entertains a great esteem for the French nation, as it was formerly constituted; but with respect to the *regenerated* Frenchmen, he would blush to be thought their friend, and all this upon the authority of so partial an informant as Barruel, and a few of his coadjutors. At the conclusion of the "Bloody Buoy," we have a long instructive essay, tracing all the horrors of the French Revolution to their *real* causes, namely, the licentious and infidel philosophy of the present age. Of course it could not be otherwise expected, but that Voltaire, Rousseau, Condorcet, and even Talleyrand, must come in for a very large share of the author's abuse. In regard to the second of those celebrated individuals, we suppose that Cobbett by some means obtained possession of the first volume of his Confessions; and picking out a few of the juvenile transgressions of the young philosopher, attempts to make the American people believe that the French Revolution, by a particular concatenation of circumstances, and a regular gradation of

effective causes, was, in some degree, owing to Jean Jaques sleeping with the wife of a gentleman, at whose house he was invited to dine.

The word republic had a hateful sound in the ears of Cobbett, but it was only when it was pronounced in France, or in relation to the government of France. In America, it had to his ears a most delightful sound, and he expresses himself, that it is the only form of government, which is really suitable to the nature of man. This might have been all very prudent and politic, in order to keep the Americans in good humour with him, but still, when speaking of the government of America, he is always very shy in using the word republic, but always speaks of it as the Federal Government of America; but in regard to the republic of France, he says, "Our enlightened philosophers run on in a fine canting strain, about the bigotry and ignorance of their ancestors, but I would ask them, what more stupid, doltish bigotry can there be, than to make the sound of a word the standard of bad or good government? What is there in the combination of the letters, which make up the word *republic*?" and we in our turn may inquire, what is there in the combination of the letters, which make up the word *monarchy*, that the bellowing of it forth, should compensate for the want of every virtue, and even for common sense and common honesty? Cobbett, however, draws a line of distinction between the republic of America and that of France. "If," says he, "you call the government of America a republic, and judge of the meaning of the word by the effects of that government, it will admit of a most amiable interpretation; but if we are to judge of it by what it has produced in France, it means all that is ruinous, tyrannical, blasphemous, and bloody." This sort of reasoning might have been conclusive to Cobbett, but it is at best flimsy and superficial; all forms of government are either good or bad, according to the manner in which they are administered. The republic of Switzerland was for a length of time a pattern for all European governments; the monarchy of Russia has been, and still is the

pattern of despotism, oppression, and tyranny : and Mr. Cobbett ought to have known that history does not furnish us with a single precedent, in which an entire change was ever effected, in the form of the government of a country, whether it be from a republic to a monarchy, or *vice versa*, which was not distinguished, more or less, by the most horrible excesses. Mr. Cobbett, however, saw nothing in the French revolution, but a disorganization of all the civilized states of Europe ; he stopped not to draw a parallel between the bloody scenes that have been enacted in this country, on the occasion of any great political change : but judging of the whole French nation by a few monsters who appeared on the revolutionary stage, he passed his sweeping anathema on all Frenchmen alike, and this impolitic mode of conduct soon drew around him a host of enemies.

Mr. Cobbett had offended the majority of the booksellers of Philadelphia, for he could not be brought to assume that suppleness of character, which was necessary for the promotion of their views, and finding the hostility against him to increase, he determined to commence business on his own account. For which purpose in the spring of 1796, he took a house in Second Street, Philadelphia, where he intended to carry on the bookselling business in all its branches, which appeared to him the means of realising an independence, and of propagating his writings. In the early part of the year 1796, he had been chiefly employed on his "Political Censors," of which he published one every month, but as they chiefly relate to American politics, and particularly to the relations of that country with France, their contents afford little interest to the general reader.

In the month of May, he took possession of his house, but as it required considerable repairs and fitting up, he was prevented from opening it, till the second week in July.

Until the time that he took this house, he had remained almost unknown as a writer. There were a few persons, who knew that he was the person, who had assumed the name of Peter Porcupine, but it was not a matter of general notoriety.

It was, however, more generally known than Cobbett suspected; for it could not be supposed that after the affronts, which he had heaped upon the heads of the Bradford family, and the dirt which he had thrown in the face of Mr. Swanwick, and other leading characters in Philadelphia, that they would not take every opportunity of exposing the author, and inflicting upon him all the injury which lay in their power. Whatever secrecy, however, had been maintained, whilst he issued his political pamphlets through the medium of a bookseller, whose interest it might have been to keep up the mystery respecting the identity and abode of the author, it was all done away with, when it was known that he had taken the lease of a large house, a transaction which became a topic of public conversation, and drew the eyes of the democrats and the French upon him, who still lorded it over the city, and who very deservedly owed him a grudge for the violence with which he had spoken of them. He had not, however, been located many days in his new habitation, before the violence of his enemies began to display itself, and on the 19th July, Mr. Elmslie, partner of Mr. John Olden, called on him with the following letter, which roused the haughty spirit of Cobbett, and gave cause to the publication of his pamphlet, entitled "*The Scarecrow*." This infamous letter was as follows :

" To Mr. John Olden, Merchant,
Chesnut Street.

SIR,

A certain William Cobbett, alias Peter Porcupine, I am informed is your tenant. This daring scoundrell, not satisfied with having repeatedly traduced the people of this country, vilified the most eminent and patriotic characters among us, and grossly abused our allies the French, in his detestable productions, has now the astonishing effrontery to expose those very publications in his window for sale, as well as certain prints indicative of the prowess of our enemies the British, and the disgrace of the French. Calculat-

ing largely upon the moderation or rather *pucellanimity* of our citizens, this puppy supposes he may even *insults* us with impunity, but he will ere long find himself dreadfully mistaken. Though his miserable publications have not been hitherto considered worthy of notice, the late manifestation of his impudence and enmity to this country will not be passed over. With the view, therefore, of preventing your feeling the blow designed for him, *I* now address you. When the time of retribution arrives, it may not be convenient to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. Your property, therefore, may suffer. For depend upon it, brick walls will not screen the rascal from punishment, when once the business is undertaken. As a friend, therefore, I advise you to save your property, by either compelling Mr. Porcupine to leave your house, or at all events oblige him to cease exposing his abominable productions, or any of his *courtley* prints, at his window for sale. In this way only you may avoid danger to your house, and perhaps save the rotten *carcase* of your tenant for the present.

July 16, 1796.

A HINT.

Mr. Cobbett now thought his situation somewhat perilous, not that he feared the attack from a secret and clandestine enemy, but he began to reflect how far his own immediate interest was concerned with the line of conduct which he had adopted. Such truths as he had published, no one had dared to utter in the United States, since the rebellion. He knew that these truths had mortally offended the leading men amongst the democrats, who could at any time muster a mob quite sufficient to destroy his house and to murder him. He had not a friend to whom he could look with any reasonable hope of receiving efficient support, and as to the law, he had seen too much of republican justice, to expect any thing but persecution from that quarter. In short, there were in Philadelphia, about ten thousand persons, all of whom might have rejoiced to see him murdered, and there might probably be two thousand who would have been very sorry for it, but

not above fifty of whom would have stirred an inch to save him.

As the time approached for opening his shop, his friends grew more anxious for his safety. It was recommended to him, to be cautious how he exposed at his window any thing that might provoke the people, and above all, not to put up any aristocratical portraits, which would certainly cause his windows to be demolished.

He saw the danger, but he also saw, that he must at once set all danger at defiance, or live in everlasting subjection to the prejudices and caprice of the democratical mob. He resolved on the former, and as his shop was to open on a Monday morning, he employed himself all day on Sunday in preparing an exhibition, that he thought would put the courage and power of his enemies to the test.

Early on the Monday morning, he took down his shutters; such a sight had not been seen in Philadelphia for twenty years; never since the beginning of the rebellion had any one dared to hoist at his window the portrait of George the Third. The city was in a state of excitement, and by way of answering the charges contained in the foregoing letter, he published the "Scarecrow," in which he first tells his calumniators, that "It is true, he had not fallen into the beaten track of confounding the good with the bad, of lumping the enemies and the friends of public happiness together, and fawning on them indiscriminately. He had not said they were all wise and virtuous, and that virtue and wisdom is (are) to be found amongst them alone. No," says Cobbett, "I am no spaniel, nor will I be one, I address myself to the good sense of my readers, and to that alone; I am no buffoon, nor whining parasite; I am not their man."

Respecting the aristocratical prints, Mr. Cobbett meets the charge with all that biting sarcasm, and caustic severity, which are the distinguishing features of his writings. Amongst those prints, as exhibiting the prowess of the British arms, the decisive victory of Lord Howe over the French fleet, on the 1st June 1794, gave particular offence. "But," says

Cobbet, "if it be indicative 'of the disgrace of our allies,' it is no fault of mine. If the defeat be disgrace, they certainly were most shockingly disgraced on that day. But I thought it had been long ago agreed upon, that though the fleet got a drabbing, and a pretty decent one too, the victory was, *in fact*, on the side of the French. I am sure that Barrerre told the French people so, and I am sure most of our newspapers told the American people the same story; how many believed them I will not pretend to say; but if it was a victory *in fact*, I am treating people with a representation of it, that's all, and am by no means exposing, 'what is indicative of British prowess.' "

The following is Cobbett himself, "When William Penn was tracing out his beloved city of Philadelphia, if any one had told him that the time would come, when a man should be threatened with murder for offering to sale in one of the streets, a print, 'indicative of British prowess,' I much question if the good man, though a Quaker, would not have said that it was a d—d lie. Poor old fellow! he little dreamed of what was to happen at the close of the enlightened eighteenth century."

But in regard to the courtly prints, Cobbett asks, "What does the cut-throat mean. I have Ankerstrom the regicide; that can be no courtly print at any rate. I have indeed the portraits of the late king and queen of France, but as they are dead, one would imagine that they could create no alarm. 'Tis true, I have the portraits of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, and several other noble personages, but then I have Marat and Lepelletier, by way of rubbing off as I go. I have a right reverend father in God in one corner of my window, and if I could procure the right irreverend father in the devil, Tom Paine, I would hoist him on the other, for want of him I have Dr. Priestley, who, upon a shift, is very capable of supplying his place.

"I have some groups too, executed by order of the French Convention, which I humbly presume, will not be called courtly. The taking of the Bastile decorates one pane of my

window, as it did the Birmingham club room; the French people on their marrow bones acknowledging the existence of God, by order of Robespierre, decorates another; and a third is ornamented with a representation of the glorious 'victory' obtained over the Swiss guards, on the 10th August 1792. I am promised a print of poor Richard in the arms of a brace of angels, who are carrying him off, God knows whither. I am sure now all these things are republican enough, and if my sovereign lords will but please to take my whole collection into view, I cannot think that they will find me so criminal as I have been represented."

In the "Scarecrow" Mr. Cobbett enters upon an explanation of his motive for publishing his pamphlets, and as it is illustrative of a most important part of his literary career, it shall be given in his own words:—

"When I first took up my pen, I found a good deal of difficulty to get access to the press at all, not because the manuscript I offered contained any thing rebellious or immoral, but because it was not adapted to what was supposed to be the taste of the public. In fact, the press was at that time, generally speaking, as far as related to what is usually termed politics, in the hands of a daring and corrupt faction, who, by deceiving some, and intimidating others, had blocked up every avenue to true information. My publications were looked upon as so many acts of rebellion against this despotic combination, and therefore every possible trick was essayed to discredit them and their author; all these tricks have, however, proved vain.

"My object, and my only object in writing, was to contribute my mite towards the support of a government, under which I enjoyed peace and plenty; this object I have pursued as steadily as my small share of leisure would allow me, and that I have not laboured in vain, the present conduct of the democratic faction most amply proves. They at first made some pitiful attempts to answer me; those soon sunk out of my sight, and were forgotten for ever. They then vomited forth calumnies against their author, calumnies so totally de-

void of all truth, and even probability, that even their own herd did not believe a word they contained. One of these calumnies was, that I had refused to pay my taxes, whereas the small portion of taxes that I have had to pay, has been always paid without hesitation. Next, they published a blasphemous book under my assumed name, this failed also; and the city of New York has witnessed their shameful defeat as well as Philadelphia. At last, smarting all over with the lashes which I had given them, and fearing a continuation, they have had recourse to the poor, sneaking trick of a threatening letter; a trick of robbers, who have not courage enough to venture their necks. I have often been congratulated on my triumph over this once towering, but now fallen and despicable faction, and I now possess undeniable proof that the triumph is complete.

“ Mr. Olden is told there is but one way of saving his house, and that is, by obliging me to cease exposing my country prints at my window for sale. It would seem by this, that the cut-throats look upon me as Olden’s vassal. I shall convince them that I am not. To oblige me to desist from any branch of my lawful occupation, would prove the toughest job that ever any landlord undertook, should he be silly enough to attempt it. As to obliging me to quit his house, there are no hopes there either, for I have a lease of it, and a lease that I will hold in spite of all the sans culottes in America. I would not retract a sentence, nor a single expression of what I have written, if the most bloody of the most bloody democrats had his foot upon my breast, and his long knife at my throat, and that for the future, I will continue to publish and expose for sale whatever I please, and that I will never cease to oppose, in some way or other, the enemies of the country in which I live, so long as one of them shall have the impudence to show his head. Hitherto I have given acids only, I will now drench them with vinegar mixed with gall.”

That a man like Cobbett, growing as he was into notoriety, and rendering himself highly obnoxious to a very

powerful political party, should not escape an attack, both from open and insidious enemies, was to be expected as a matter of course; one pamphlet appeared after the other, some distinguished by considerable talent, to which, however, at first Cobbett condescended not to reply; but the following, however, which appeared in the Aurora, roused the slumbering giant, and he made ready his club to crush the heads of the Little-jacks, who had attempted to kill him.

FOR THE AURORA.

HISTORY OF PETER PORCUPINE.

Mr. Bache.

As the people of America may not be informed who Peter Porcupine is, the celebrated manufacturer of lies, and retailer of filth, I will give you some little account of this pestiferous animal. This wretch was obliged to abscond from his darling old England, to avoid being turned off into the other world before, what he supposed, his time. It may be well imagined that in a land of liberty, and flowing with milk and honey, his precipitate retreat could not have been owing to any offence committed against the government, very honourable to himself. Gnawed by the worm that never dies, his own wretchedness would ever prevent him from making any attempt in favour of human happiness. His usual occupation at home was that of a garret scribbler, excepting a little *night business* occasionally, to supply unavoidable exigencies. Grub-street did not answer his purpose, and being scented by certain tipstiffs for something more than scribbling, he took *French leave* for France. His evil genius pursued him here, and as his fingers were as long as ever, he was obliged as suddenly to leave the Republic, which has now drawn forth all his venom, for her attempt to do him *justice*. On his arrival in this country, he figured some time as a pedagogue, but as this employment scarcely furnished him salt to his porridge, he having been literally without bread to eat, and not a second shirt to his back, he resumed his old

occupation of scribbling, having little chance of success in the other employments, which drove him to this country. His talent at lies and Billingsgate rhetoric, introduced him to the notice of a certain foreign agent, who was known during the Revolution by the name of *Traitor*. This said agent has been seen to pay frequent visits to Peter. To atone for his transgressions in his mother country, as well as to get a little more bread to eat, than he had been accustomed to do, he enlisted in the cause of his gracious majesty. From the extreme of poverty and filth, he has suddenly sprouted into at least the appearance of better condition, for he has taken a house for the sale of his large poison, at the enormous rent of twelve hundred dollars a year, and has paid a year's rent in advance!! The public will now be able to account for the overflowings of his gall against the republic of France, and all the republicans of this country, as well as his devotion to the cause of tyranny and of kings. From the frequency of the visits paid him by the agent already mentioned, and his sudden change of condition, secret service money must have been liberally employed; for his zeal to make atonement to his mother country, seems proportioned to the magnitude of his offence, and the *guineas* advanced. As this *fugitive felon* has crept from his hole, his quills will now become harmless, for hitherto they have only excited apprehension, because the *beast* that shot them was concealed. I have a number of anecdotes respecting him, that I will soon trouble you with, for the amusement of the public. This statement will convince Peter, that I know him well, and that I have only disclosed a part of the truth.

PAUL HEDGEHOG.

There were some parts of the foregoing letter which stung Cobbett severely, for although there might be a little exaggeration as well as misrepresentation, yet there were some truths, which Cobbett supposed were only known on the other side of the Atlantic. With the view of arresting the circulation

of the poison which the letter in the *Aurora* was well calculated to promote, he resolved to publish a sketch of his own life, on the principle that when a man once comes forward as a candidate for public admiration, esteem or compassion, his opinion, his principles, his motives, every action of his life public or private, becomes the fair subject of public discussion. Denying in many respects, the verity of the foregoing remarks, as far as they apply to the literary character, for it would be both unjust and illiberal that because an individual enriches the literature of his country with the effusions of his talents, that all his actions public or private, become the fair subject of public discussion, we shall merely state, that Cobbett thought himself justified in the publication of his life, and that he perfectly approved of others publishing whatever they might know concerning him. "Let them," he says, "write on, till their old pens are worn to stumps; let the devils sweat; let them fire their balls at my reputation, till the very press cries out murder. If ever they hear me whine or complain, I will give them leave to fritter my carcass, and trail my guts along the streets, as the French *sans culottes* did those of Thomas Mauduit."

It would be unjust to apply the standard of criticism to the "Life of Peter Porcupine," as written by Cobbett in America, considering the peculiar circumstances under which it was compiled; but as a specimen of autobiography, it is most lamentably deficient in that exhibition of character, from which a correct estimate could be formed of the talent and disposition of the individual. On some circumstances, which require a full explanation, and in which his integrity and general character are concerned, he is studiously and designedly silent; we allude particularly to his abrupt departure from England, for which no ostensible cause, nor indeed any cause whatever is given. He obtains a court martial against four of the officers of the regiment to which he belonged, he declines as the prosecutor to make his appearance, and suddenly departs from England, leaving his wife behind him. In fact, in regard to his own life, particularly the earlier part of it,

little information is to be obtained from his own writings. The publication, however, of his life in America, in refutation of the statements contained in the letter of Paul Hedgehog exposed him to another attack, the least expected by him, which was, that he was himself the Paul Hedgehog, and that the letter was written merely as a *ruse*, to give him an opportunity of telling the Americans, who, and what he was; but on this charge, Cobbett says, "Can any one be stupid enough to imagine, that I would, particularly at this time, have run the risk of being detected in such a shameful business? and how could it have been undertaken without running that risk? had I written it myself, there would have been my hand-writing against me, and had I employed another, that other might have betrayed me, he might have ruined me in the opinion of all those, whom it is my interest as well as my pride to be esteemed by, or at best, I should have been at his mercy for ever afterwards."

In the mean time, there was scarcely a printing office in Philadelphia, from which a shot was not fired at Cobbett, some of heavier metal than others, but all of which fell as harmless, as if they had been directed against the impenetrable hide of a rhinoceros; and yet Cobbett began to think himself a person of some importance, when he saw the newspapers filled from the top to the bottom, and the windows and the houses placarded with a *Blue Shop for Peter Porcupine; A Pill for Peter Porcupine; Peter Porcupine Detected; A Roaster for Peter Porcupine; A History of Peter Porcupine, A Picture of Peter Porcupine*, and other pamphlets all levelled against him, and which few men but himself could have withstood; but on this subject he says in one of his letters to his father, "Dear father, when you used to set me off to work in the morning, dressed in my blue smock frock and woollen spatterdashes, with my bag of bread and cheese and bottle of small beer swung over my shoulder on the little crook, that my good old godfather Boxall gave me, little did you imagine that I should become one day so great a man as to have my picture stuck in the windows, and have four

whole books published about me in the course of one week." The remarks which he himself makes on the foregoing passage are truly characteristic of him. "Such," says he, "was the commencement of a letter which I wrote to my father, and if it reaches him, will make the old man drink an extraordinary pot of ale to my health. Heaven bless him! I think I see him now by his old-fashioned fire side, reading the letter to his neighbours. 'Ay! ay!' says he, 'Will, will stand his ground, wherever he goes.' And so I will, father, in spite of all the hell of democracy.

"When I had the honour," says Cobbett, "to serve king George, I was elated enough at the putting on of my worsted shoulder knot, and afterwards my silver-laced coat, what must be my feelings then, upon seeing half a dozen authors, all doctors, or the devil knows what, writing about me at one time, and ten times that number of printers, bookbinders and booksellers, bustling, running and flying about in all directions, to announce my fame to the impatient public. It is true, my heroic adversaries do all set out with telling their readers, that I am a contemptible wretch, not worth notice. They should have said not worth the notice of any honest man, and as they would naturally have excluded themselves by such an addition, they would have preserved consistency at least; but to sit down hammering their brains for a fortnight or three weeks, and at last each of them publish a pamphlet, about me and my performances, and then tell the public that *I am not worth* notice, is such a gross insult to common sense, that nothing but democratic stupidity can be a sufficient excuse for.

"At the very moment that I am writing, these sorry fellows are bugging themselves in the thought that they have silenced me, *cut me up* as they call it. They think they see me prostrate, and they are swaggering over me like a popish priest over a dead corpse. It would require other pens than theirs to silence me. I shall keep plodding on in my old way, as I used to do at the plough, and I think it will not be looked upon as any very extraordinary trait of vanity to say, that

the Political Censor will be read, when the very names of their bungling pamphlets will be forgotten."

Mr. Cobbett must have had a heart of steel to have withstood the attacks, which were now made upon him from every quarter. The lowest scurrility and abuse were now resorted to, to vilify and degrade him in the estimation of the American people, and not content with bespattering his own character, but they, in the most unprincipled manner, attacked the unblemished reputation of Mrs. Cobbett. Lampoon followed upon lampoon, and squib upon squib, until Cobbett, determined as he says, "to blow all his enemies to the devil," sent forth his "*Blunderbuss*," and sure enough, he scattered such a volley of shot amongst them, that the majority betook themselves off, not wishing to stand the heat of another fire.

There was, however, one caricature that appeared against Cobbett, with which he was highly amused. He was represented as urged on to write by his old master King George, under the form of a crowned lion, who of course came accompanied with the devil. The *jay*, (alluding to Mr. Jay,) with the treaty in his beak, was mounted on the lion's back, though by the by, it was ever said by the democrats, that the lion rode the *jay*. His satanic majesty holds out to Cobbett a bag of money, as an encouragement to destroy the idol, liberty, to which he points. The American eagle is represented as drooping his wings, in consequence of Cobbett's hostility, and America herself on the same account weeps over the bust of Franklin. This was the only part of the caricature with which Cobbett found fault, for if by America the people of America be to be understood, it is but justice to Cobbett to say, that he endeavoured to make America laugh, instead of weep. Of course, Cobbett is himself the hero of the piece, and he is brought forward to the front of the stage, where the artist makes him trample upon Randolph's Defence, The Rights of Man; old Common Sense; Madison; Gallatin; Swanvick; and Peter Pindar; respecting the latter person, it was always a matter of surprise to Cobbett how the artist, in his ignorance, could include him in the num-

ber of those against whom Cobbett had directed his pen, for in many points their opinions perfectly coincided, particularly about the French and Tom Paine, for how could he be displeased at, or disprove of an author, who wrote of the French as follows :—

Hear me dame Nature, in these men of *Cork*,
Blush at a Frenchman's *heart*, thy handy work ;

A dunghill, that luxuriant feeds

The gaudy and the rankest weeds :

Deception, grub-like, taints its very core,

Like flies in carrion—*Prithee make no more.*

Yes, Frenchmen, this is my unvarying creed,

Ye are not rational indeed ;

So low have fond conceit, and folly sunk ye,

Only a larger kind of monkey.

Or could he feel a displeasure at an author, who thus writes of Paine :—

Paine in his thirst for reputation,

Has written to deserve damnation.

And yet this was the writer, that the learned and sagacious democrats of America made Cobbett trample upon.

During the year 1796, Cobbett continued the publication of his Political Censors, which being chiefly confined to the discussion of American politics, possess little or no subjects for discussion in the present work. In the month of December of the same year, he published his celebrated " Letter to the infamous Thomas Paine," in answer to the Letter of that person to General Washington. Perhaps a more biting, stinging composition never issued from the pen of any writer, and some singular ideas must have shot across the mind of Cobbett, when in a few years afterwards, he considers the bones of that same individual, whom he had so grossly, and severely reviled and reprobated, as worthy of being exhumed and carried to England, with the same devotional spirit as a pilgrim would bear a relic from the Holy Land. It is, however, not a little singular that Cobbett in this letter, brings forth

some very heavy and well-founded charges against Paine, for his inconsistency in regard to General Washington; whereas, in a few years afterwards, he himself lies justly under the same charge in regard to Paine.

We will first give a few of the inconsistencies of Paine, and then contrast them with those of Cobbett:—

PAINE.

Letter to General Washington.

When we speak of military characters, something more is understood than constancy, and something more ought to be understood than the Fabian system of *doing nothing*. Old Mrs. Thompson, the housekeeper of head quarters, could have done *it as well as Mr. Washington*. No wonder that we see so much pusillanimity in the *President*, when we see so little enterprise in the *General*.

Ibid.

Elevated to the chair of the Presidency, you assumed the merit of every thing to yourself, and the *natural ingratitude of your constitution* began to manifest itself. You commenced your presidential career by encouraging and swallowing the grossest adulation, and you travelled America from one end to the other, to put yourself in the way of receiving it. The lands obtained by the revolution, were lavished upon partisans. The interest

PAINE.

Common Sense.

Voltaire has remarked that king William never appeared to full advantage, but in difficulties and action; the same remark may be made in General Washington, for *the character fits him*, and I reckon it among those kind of public blessings, which we do not see, that God hath blessed him with uninterrupted health, and given him a mind that *can flourish even upon care*.

Rights of Man, Part 2nd.

I presume that no man in his sober senses will compare the character of any of the kings of Europe, with that of General Washington. In this place I cannot help remarking, that the *character and services* of this gentleman, are sufficient to put all those men called kings to shame. While they are receiving from the sweat and labours of mankind, a prodigality of pay, to which neither their abilities nor their services can entitle them, *he is render-*

of the disbanded soldier was sold to the spectator, injustice was acted under the pretence of faith, and the chief of the army became the patron of the friend.

ing every service in his power, and refusing every pecuniary reward.

Ibid.

Dedication to the first part of the Rights of Man, to General Washington.

And as to you, Sir, treachery in private friendship, and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an impostor; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any.

SIR,

I present you a small treatise in defence of those principles of freedom, which your exemplary virtue has so eminently contributed to establish. That the Rights of Man may become as universal as your benevolence can wish, and that you may enjoy the happiness of seeing the new world regenerate the old, is the prayer of

SIR,

Yours, &c.,

THOMAS PAINE.

Well indeed might Cobbett inveigh against these inconsistencies, but little did he dream that he would himself stand convicted of still grosser, in regard to the individual, whom he so unmercifully chastises. Thus he speaks of Paine in 1796:—

Letter to Paine.

Now atrocious, infamous miscreant; "look on this picture, and on this." I would call on you to blush, but the rust of villainy has eaten your cheek to the bone, and dried up the

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Political Register 1818.

Whatever fault may be ascribed to Mr. Paine, not one can lay inconsistency to his charge. From his first appearance in the political world, he adopted one uniform mode of

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source of suffusion. Are these the proofs of your disinterestedness and *consistency*? It is thus that you are always the same, and that you preserve *through life* the right-angled character of man.

Letter to Paine.

If Robespierre were still living, you would be as much his *flatterer* and slave, as you are the *flatterer* and slave of Carnot. You were made for a French republican. The baseness, which they have constantly discovered, *is in your nature*. While the tyrant is alive, he is a god, when dead, he is a devil. An ignominious death, the awful avenger of crimes, and with other men, the oblivion of injuries, with you unlocks the faculties of reproach, and changes your praises into execrations. You are true carrion crows; you flutter in flocks from the presence of the kite, but when he is wounded by the hunter, and lies gasping on the earth, you attack his prostrate carcass, and pick out his eyes that are closing in death.

opinion, and although I could not go along with him in all the wanderings of his inflamed imagination, yet as an arduous defender of the people's right, as a strenuous and unflinching advocate for the curtailment of aristocratical power, as the champion of popular power, in opposition to the abuses of a monarchical government, *Paine will always stand pre-eminent in the world.*

Political Register 1819.

It has been said that Paine was a *flatterer* of the great, and even of the wicked, in order to obtain his end—now Paine of all men, *could never flatter in his life*. His mind and heart were cast in a different mould, and whatever his political enemies might bring forward to traduce his character, he ultimately emerged from the clouds, which they attempted to cast around him, the brighter for the obscurity in which they had attempted to envelope him.

*Letter to Paine.**Register 1818.*

Your brutal attempt to blacken the character of Washington, was all that was wanted to crown his honour and your infamy; you were before sunk to a level with the damned, but now you are plunged beneath them.

Defamation forms no part of the character of Paine, he never descended to blacken another's fame, and having once formed an opinion of an individual, he seldom or ever retracted it.

It is, however, not only in regard to the character of Paine, that the inconsistency of Cobbett so particularly distinguishes itself, but in almost every other character, that comes under his examination, and particularly in regard to Washington himself. It was scarcely possible to conceive two more opposite characters, than Cobbett has at different times drawn of Washington, as if he had actually forgotten every word that he had previously written; on this subject, however, we shall enter more into detail, when the time arrives in which Cobbett repudiates the opinions which he formerly held, and adopts others in direct contradiction to them.

The storm, that had for a while subsided, now broke out afresh, and missiles of every description were hurled by the democrats and the French party, against the offending head of Mr. Cobbett. He saw that the occasional publication of his pamphlets gave him not the means of repelling the attacks of his adversaries, for as they came upon him on a sudden, and from quarters, whence he did not expect them, so was it necessary, that he should have a weapon in his power, by which the effects of those attacks could be crushed by instantaneous force. For this purpose, he established in March 1796, a newspaper, the celebrated "Porcupine's Gazette," against which, the whole ponderous battery of the democrats was levelled, but, who in return received so many sharp quills from the Porcupine, that the victory was ultimately declared to belong to the latter. In one of these papers appeared the

following squib, which perhaps no other pen but that of Cobbett could produce. It is entitled his last Will and Testament; to which he affixes the following exordium:

“ Since I took up the calling that I now follow, I have received about forty threatening letters; some talk of fisticuffs, others of kicks, but far the greater part menace me with outright murder. Several friends have called to caution me against the lurking cut-throats, and it seems to me to be the persuasion of every one, that my brains are to be knocked out, the first time I venture from home in the dark.

“ Under these terrific circumstances, it is impossible that death should not stare me in the face, I have therefore got myself into as good a state of preparation as my sinful profession will, I am afraid, admit of, and as to my worldly affairs, I have settled them in the following Will, which I publish in order that my dear friends, the legatees, may if they think themselves injured or neglected, have an opportunity of complaining, before it is too late:—

“ In the name of Fun, Amen. I, Peter Porcupine, Pamphleteer and Newsmonger, being (as yet) sound both in body and mind, do this fifteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, make, declare, and publish, this my last Will and Testament, in manner, form, and substance following, to wit:
Imprints. I leave my body to Dr. Michael Leib,* a member of the legislature of Pennsylvania, to be by him dissected (if he knows how to do it,) in presence of the rump of the democratic society. In it they will find a heart that held them in abhorrence, that never palpitated at their threats, and that to its best, bade them defiance. But my chief motive for making this bequest is, that my spirit may look down with contempt on their cannibal-like triumph over a breathless corpse.

* This Dr. Leib was a German, and his name in the German language signifies *body*. Thus he went by the name of the *body doctor*.—Ed.

ITEM. As I make no doubt that the above said Dr. Leib, and some other doctors that I could mention, would like very well to skin me, I request that they, or one of them may do it, and that the said Leib's father may tan my skin, after which I desire my executors to have eight copies of my works complete, bound in it; one copy to be presented to the five sultans of France; one to each of their divans; one to the governor of Pennsylvania; to citizens Madison, Giles and Gallatin, one each; and the remaining one to the Democratic Society of Philadelphia, to be carefully preserved among their archives.

ITEM. To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councils of the City of Philadelphia, I bequeath all the sturdy young hucksters, who infest the market, and who, to maintain their bastards, tax the honest inhabitants many thousand pounds annually. I request them to take them into their worshipful keeping—to chasten their bodies for the good of their souls; and, moreover, to keep a sharp look-out after their gallants; and remind the latter of the old proverb, Touch pot, touch penny.

ITEM. To Thomas Jefferson, philosopher, I leave a curious Norway Spider, with a hundred legs and nine pair of eyes; likewise the first black cut-throat general he can catch hold of, to be flayed alive, in order to determine with more certainty the real cause of the dark colour of his skin: and should the said Thomas Jefferson survive Banneker, the almanack maker, I request he will get the brains of said Philomath carefully dissected, to satisfy the world in what respects they differ from those of a white man.

ITEM. To the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, I will and bequeath a correct copy of Thornton's Plan for abolishing the use of the English language, and for introducing in its stead a republican one, the representative characters of which bear strong resemblance to pot-hooks and hangers; and for the discovery of which plan, the said society did, in the year 1793, grant to the said language-maker 500

dollars premium. It is my earnest desire, that the copy of this valuable performance, which I hereby present, may be shown to all travelling literati, as a proof of the ingenuity of the author, and of the wisdom of the Society.

ITEM. To Dr. Benjamin Rush, I will and bequeath a copy of the Censor for January 1797; but upon the express condition, that he does not in any wise or guise, either at the time of my death, or six months after, pretend to speak, write, or publish an eulogium on me, my calling or character, either literary, military, civil, or political.

ITEM. To my dear fellow labourer, Noah Webster, gentleman citizen, Esquire; and Newsman, I will and bequeath a prognosticating barometer, of curious construction and great utility, by which at a single glance, the said Noah will be able to discern the exact state that the public mind will be in, in the ensuing year, and will thereby be able to trim by degrees, and not expose himself to detection, as he now does by his sudden lee shore tacks. I likewise bequeath to the said gentleman citizen, six Spanish milled dollars, to be expended on a new plate of his portrait at the head of his spelling book, that which graces it at present being so ugly, that it scares the children from their lessons; but this legacy is only to be paid him on condition, that he leaves out the title of esquire, at bottom of said picture, which is extremely odious in an American school book, and must inevitably tend to corrupt the political principles of the republican babies that behold it. And I do most earnestly advise, exhort, and conjure the said squire newsman to change the title of his paper, "The Minerva," for that of the Political Centaur.

ITEM. To F. A. Michlenburg, Esquire, speaker of a late House of Representatives, I leave a most superbly finished statue of Janus.

ITEM. To Tom the tinker, I leave a liberty cap, a tri-coloured cockade, a wheel-barrow full of oysters, and a hogshead of grog. I also leave him three blank checks on the banks

of Pennsylvania, leaving him the task of filling them up, requesting him, however, to be rather more merciful than he has shown himself heretofore.

ITEM. To the Governor of Pennsylvania, and cashier of the bank of the said State, as to joint legatees, I will and bequeath that good old proverb, *Honesty is the best policy*, and this legacy I have chosen for these worthy gentlemen, as the only thing about which I am sure they will never disagree.

ITEM. To Trench Coxe, of Philadelphia, citizen, I will and bequeath a crown of hemlock, as a recompense for his attempt to throw an odium on the administration of General Washington; and I most positively enjoin on my executors, to see that the said crown be shaped exactly like that which this spindle-shanked legatee wore before General Howe, when he made his triumphant entry into Philadelphia.

ITEM. To Thomas Lord Bradford (otherwise called Goosy Tom) bookseller, printer, newsman, and member of the Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, I will and bequeath a copy of the Peerage of Great Britain in order that the said Lord Thomas may the more exactly ascertain what probability there is of his succeeding to the seat which his noble relation now fills in the House of Lords.

ITEM. To all and singular the authors in the United States, whether they write prose or verse, I will and bequeath a copy of my Life and Adventures, and I advise the said authors to study with particular care the fortieth and forty-first pages thereof; more especially, and above all things, I exhort and conjure them never "*to publish it together*," though the bookseller should be a saint.

ITEM. To Edward Randolph, Esquire, late Secretary of State, to Mr. J. A. Dallas, Secretary of the State of Pennsylvania, and his Excellency Thomas Muffin, Governor of the said unfortunate State, I will and bequeath to each of them, a copy of the sixteenth paragraph of Fauchett's intercepted letter.

ITEM. To citizen J. Swanvick, Member of Congress, by the will and consent of the sovereign people, I leave bills of exchange in London, to an enormous amount; they are all protested, indeed, but, if properly managed, may be turned to good account. I likewise bequeath to the said John, a small treatise by an Italian author, wherein the secret of pleasing the ladies is developed, and reduced to a mere mechanical operation, without the least dependence on the precarious aid of the passions; hoping that these instances of my liberality will produce in the mind of the little legislator, effects quite different from those produced therein by the king of Great Britain's pension to his parent.

ITEM. To the editors of the Boston Chronicle, the New York Argus, and the Philadelphia Merchant's Advertiser, I will and bequeath one ounce of modesty and love of truth, to be equally divided between them. I should have been more liberal in this bequest, were I not well assured that one ounce is more than they will ever make use of.

ITEM. To Franklin Bache, editor of the Aurora of Philadelphia, I will and bequeath a small bundle of French assignats, which I brought with me from the country of equality. If these should be too light in value for his pressing exigencies, I desire my executors, or any one of them, to bestow on him a second part to what he has lately received in Southwark; and as a further proof of my goodwill and affection, I request him to accept of a gag, and a brand new pair of fetters, which, if he should refuse, I will and bequeath him in lieu thereof—my malediction.

ITEM. To my beloved countrymen, the people of old England, I will and bequeath a copy of Dr. Priestley's Charity Sermon for the benefit of poor emigrants; and to the said preaching philosopher himself, I bequeath a heart full of disappointment, grief, and despair.

ITEM. To the good people of France, who remain attached to their sovereign, particularly to those among whom I was

hospitably received, I bequeath each a good strong dagger, hoping, most sincerely, that they may find courage enough to carry them to the hearts of their abominable tyrants.

ITEM. To citizen Muuro, I will and bequeath my chamber looking-glass. It is a plain but exceedingly true mirror; in it he will see the exact likeness of a traitor, who has bartered the honour and interest of his country to a perfidious and savage enemy.

ITEM. To the republican Britons, who have fled from the hand of justice in their own country, and who are a scandal, a nuisance, and a disgrace to this; I bequeath hunger and nakedness, scorn and reproach, and I do hereby positively enjoin on my executors to contribute five hundred dollars towards the erection of gallowses and gibbets, for the accommodation of the said imported patriots, when the legislators of this unhappy state shall have the wisdom to countenance such useful establishments.

ITEM. My friend, J. T. Calender, the runaway from Scotland, is of course a partaker in the last-mentioned legacy, but as a particular mark of my attention, I will and bequeath him twenty feet of pine plank, which I request my executors to see made into a pillory, to be kept for his particular use, till a gibbet can be prepared.

ITEM. To Tom Paine, the author of Common Sense, the Rights of Man, Age of Reason, and a Letter to General Washington, I bequeath a strong hempen collar, as the only legacy I can think of that is worthy of him, as well as best adapted to render his death in some measure as infamous as his life; and I do hereby direct and order my executors to send it to him by the first safe conveyance, with my compliments, and request that he will make use of it without delay, that the national razor may not be disgraced by the head of such a monster.

ITEM. To the gaunt outlandish orator, vulgarly called the Political Sinner, who in the just order of things follows next after the last-mentioned legatee, I bequeath the ho-

of the old man, and angry words at last produced actual warfare. The father armed a body of his domestics, and invaded the new settlement, where he knocked down the hen-roosts, demolished the hogpens, and destroyed some small improvements; the young men seized their father's cows, hogs, and horses, wherever they found them straying in the woods, by way of reprisal. The parties frequently came to blows, and some few lives were lost. In this state of affairs, François Le Singe, a near neighbour of John, and who had had a grudge against him, ever since they were boys, very officiously stepped in, and encouraged the young men to persevere in their hostilities, furnished them with weapons, and sent some of his pimps and prostituted lacqueys to assist them.

“This Monsieur Le Singe, for he always called himself a gentleman, was a most restless and malicious fellow; he took delight in setting his neighbours together by the ears, and would spare neither pains nor expense to bring it to bear; nay so much pleasure did he take in mischief, that he would sometimes aid one or other of the parties, but in that case, for he was no fool, he always took good care to make them pay pretty dearly for his assistance.

“The unhappy dissension between the father and sons continued for several years, until at length both grew weary, and were reconciled, indeed the circumstances of both parties rendered it necessary. The parent family was advanced farthest in improvements, and manufactured many articles that were useful to the sons, and these on the other hand had many coarse materials, such as scantling, staves, and tobacco, that were wanted by the father. A commerce so convenient and profitable to both could not fail to revive the friendship and affection of former times, and it very soon had this effect. Although the relationships of parent and children could not be revived, their season being past, the want of them was effectually supplied by the ties of mutual interest and friendship, founded on the solid basis of esteem and confidence.

"In this state of things, one of those untoward accidents happened, which sometimes occur to disturb the peace of society. The family of Le Singe fell into a state of dreadful confusion; some of them went stark mad, occasioned, it was thought, by a disorder which they caught in the hot weather, while they were aiding the sons of farmer Blunt. Be that as it may, the greater part of the servants fell upon their master, cut his throat, murdered his wife and sister, poisoned his son and heir, and either killed or drove away all their fellow servants that refused to join them; some of these they cut, and stabbed, and hacked, and mangled in a most shocking manner; they murdered women in childbed, strangled poor little infants, and others they stuck alive upon the tops of their dung forks, and in short, they committed such horrid cruelties, as it makes one's blood run cold to think of. After this they seized their master's estate, and not satisfied with the mischief they had done at home, despatched emissaries from their gang, to debauch the servants of all the neighbouring farms; threatening at the same time to set fire to the four corners of the parish, if any one dared to oppose them. But to conceal their real purpose, they gave out that they had no intention to injure their neighbours. All the hypocrites wanted, they said, was to reform some ancient abuses that had crept into the parish from inattention. This, however, did not quiet the general apprehension; everybody saw that murder was the natural business of such a banditti, and expected nothing else; they were, therefore, not astonished when they heard, that the result of this reforming project was to cut off all the progenitors of the parish, and to divide their estates among the servants, reserving a large portion of each for themselves. As far as they met with sufficient encouragement, they made dreadful innovations; they left nothing civil or sacred unchanged. Besides the total transfer of property already mentioned, which was the groundwork of their reformation, they commanded that instead of walking on their feet, as men had done ever since the days of Adam, men and women too should walk on their heads, and

instead of uniting the sexes in the holy bond of wedlock, they ordained that they should range at large like the brutes; man they decreed had no more soul than a bullfrog, and that he was made only to rob, murder, and die: they swore there was neither God nor religion, and they hanged the parson of the parish before the church door, as an impostor. These, and a hundred other monstrous lies, which they termed philosophy, they endeavoured to propagate everywhere. Some of their apostles found their way into John Blunt's family, but John quickly discovered their manœuvres, and endeavoured to frustrate them by every prudent precaution, in which he was finally successful. This enraged the scoundrels, and they instantly swore to destroy John with all his family, and indeed they left no means untried to accomplish it. But John was a strong man, and as resolute as strong, and by a peculiar way of fighting that he had, he proved his superiority, not only by keeping them off his own plantation, but by taking some of the best fields from them.

"In this state of affairs, the assassins recollecting the assistance that poor Le Singe, their late master, had given to Blunt's children, when they quarrelled with their father, resolved to apply to them for help to crush the old man. The young men received the messenger politely, and acknowledged their obligations to Le Singe, but declared that they hated fighting, and had plenty of better business on hand; they would not assist their father, they said, nor would they take part against him. This enraged the assassins beyond measure, they *sacréd*, and f—d, and stormed, and foamed, like so many demons. One of the young men they kicked on the breech, another they tweaked by the nose, and the third they pinched till he was all over black and blue.

"The young men were naturally of an amiable, peaceable disposition, which together with the ease and plenty in which they lived, inclined them to put up with a great number of injuries and insults. After the vile conduct of the treacherous servants, now become freebooters, they forebore to make reprisals in any way whatever, and even sent a messenger for

the purpose of accommodating matters. These instances of uncommon forbearance, the rascals looked upon as indications of fear; they scoffed at the poor messenger, were going to horsewhip him, and actually threatened to give him up to the mercy of their understrappers. This at last roused the spirit of the young farmers, and indeed it was time, for all the neighbours began to call them cowards; they recollected that all the folks of Le Singe, were a despicable crew, they called to mind the times when they with their good old father at the head, gave them such a drubbing, that they were obliged to go down upon their marrow bones, and promise never to interrupt them again, they looked back to those days, when not the best man in the parish, would have struck one of the young Blunts, or even spoke a saucy word to him, without having old John's fist in his face; in short, after a long struggle between pride and interest, the father and sons agreed to aid each other in chastising the violent and savage banditti. The story does not say who made the first advances, nor is it much matter, but certain it is that one fine May morning, just at sunrise, each being armed with a good cudgel, out they sallied and * * * *

cætera desunt.

Were the most accomplished historian to have undertaken an epitome of the American rebellion, and of the French revolution, he could not have succeeded better than Cobbett has done in the foregoing allegory. The application is so direct and clear, that it requires no key to explain it, at the same time that it places the conduct of the French nation, in their interference in the dispute between England and America in its true and genuine colours.

It was not, however, solely from the French party that Cobbett had reason to expect the most summary proceedings, but in his gazette, he had been for some time attacking the governor of Pennsylvania, and particularly for his conduct on the occasion of the arrival of the French frigate, the *Embuscade*, contrasted with that which was observed by him

on the arrival, a few days before, of his Britannic majesty's ship of war, the Squirrel. On the Embuscade coming slowly up the Delaware, Cobbett describes the governor of Pennsylvania, "who, God knows," he says, "is not the most discreet, or least ridiculous mortal, at the best of times, as appearing as if he were absolutely bereft of reason. In fact, his excellency looked just like a fellow staring drunk, whether with joy, or with grog, or with raw rum, he would not pretend to say, but he really went on like a bedlamite." This, and other attacks on the governor, all arising from his well known attachment to the French party, at last, excited the wrath, not only of the governor himself, but of his friends; when, as Cobbett was one day sitting in his shop, a person entered of furious mien and threatening gesture, announcing to the wondering gazetteer, that if he published any more pieces about the governor of Pennsylvania, there was *a party* ready to inflict the most summary vengeance upon him. Cobbett stared at the intruder, but said not a word—"I say, sir," said the consequential envoy, "that you are not to publish any more pieces about the governor of Pennsylvania." Cobbett still made no reply. "Mr. Cobbett, sir, did you hear me," exclaimed the messenger, "I am come to inform you, that if you publish any thing more about the governor of Pennsylvania—you'll be—you'll be tarred and feathered—sir—yes—sir—you'll be tarred and feathered—or perhaps something worse," brandishing a huge stick, which he held in his hand, "I have now delivered my message, sir, so good bye." "Good bye, sir," said Cobbett, bursting into a loud laugh, which the redoubtable envoy answered by another most valourous brandishing of his stick.

On the following day, Cobbett inserted the following notice in his gazette; "This is to inform *the said party*, that I will continue to publish whatsoever pieces I please about the governor of Pennsylvania; that my publication shall be circumscribed by the *law* and by the law alone; that I despise menaces of every description, and that let who will be slaves I am resolved to be free."

This energetic mode of conduct adopted by Cobbett, silenced *the party*, but they could not silence him, he seized upon every occasion of exposing the governor, for his avowed partiality to the French, and the governor considered it an act of prudence to maintain a dignified silence, rather than attempt to beard the lion in his very den.

There was at this time, an individual in Philadelphia, of the name of Merry, who may be said to have belonged to the Della Cruscan school of poetry, and looking out for a subject on which he could employ his poetical talent to some advantage to himself, as well, as he thought, to the edification and instruction of his readers, he thought that William Cobbett was one of the best subjects whom he could burlesque, to be by him, afterwards poetically dissected, and then suspended in one of the museums of Philadelphia, as some nondescript congener of the serpent side. Amongst other effusions, which had teemed from the prolific brain of Mr. Merry, was a theatrical piece, which was to astonish the natives of Philadelphia, and place the author in the first rank of dramatic writers. The man who ventured to attack Cobbett with his pen, generally received a speedy discharge of all obligations, and in the present instance, Mr. Merry was not long before he received a receipt in full from Cobbett, for all the literary lampoons which he had scribbled against him; and on the morning of the day that Mr. Merry's piece, entitled "The Abbey of St. Augustine," was to appear, Cobbett inserted the following epilogue in his gazette:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen! the managers are totally at a loss what to say, They are extremely sorry it has happened so, but they have mislaid the epilogue to the play.

The author of it is a modest man; though authors in general are irritable folks, Yet he is very unhappy about it, because he declares, it was excellent and full of *poetry*;

That not only the poetry was beautiful, but also that it had a great deal of wit: Upon my word I thought the poor fellow was going into a fit.

Because he came to me and said, 'My dear Mr. Harwood,* you seem to be a sensible man,

Will you go forward and speak something on the occasion, the best that you can?"

* The person who was supposed to speak the epilogue.

To which I answered, Mr. Merry, since you are so pertinacious and explicit, I'll speak one off hand, and I dare say the audience will be too kind to hiss it. So here I am, though very much alarmed, just going to begin, If any of the company are in the lobby, pray desire them to walk in."

"To-night, to-night you have seen a sick nun die,
And a friar stab himself;—' Hem! I shall get on better by and by.'
O grant your generous favour, if it is due,
And cheer our trembling bard;—' I think I shall do.'
The rose expanding with its leaves so red,
The lily that declines its humble head,
Shall form a wreath for him.—' Now really that was very well said.

I believe I ought to have mentioned the laurels and the bays,
They, however, will come of course, should we obtain your praise:
But I know it is absolutely necessary that I should give you a touch of the sublime,
Which I will now do, though I find it very difficult to express myself in rhyme."

The tragic muse all nations must adore;
Melpomene——' I am afraid you have heard something like this before.'
Her reign extends from Indus to the pole.
' Now that is capital, upon my soul.'
She paints the passions, she subdues the heart
With trumpets, ghosts, the dagger and the start;
But e'en Melpomene sometimes lets a f—t.
' I ask your pardon, ladies, from my very heart.'
Her power mysterious, animates, refines,
' I think I never spoke much better lines;'
Great revolutions, convents abolished, nuns set free,
Who soon bring forth a hopeful progeny.
War, virtue, honour, glory, liberty,
' Lord 'tis as easy as one's A. B. C.'

I suspect you rather like my tragic manner; if so, I declare
I will give up low comedy, and become a candidate for despair;
How I will mouth the blank verse, how I will groan when I am dying.
And how I shall split my sides with laughing, when I see you all a crying.
Well now, I am perfectly satisfied, and look upon it as mere fun,
To have been considering how I should begin, till I find I have done;
So I will only add, that I hope the play may be deemed worthy your protection,
And if you approve of my epilogue, I shall have no objection."

The effect of this exquisite *morceau* of raillery was, that Merry withdrew his piece, threatening Cobbett with the vengeance of the law for having so inhumanly massacred the

first bantling of his theatrical genius. Cobbett made himself merry at the effect of his biting pasquinade, however, and Merry never ventured to attack him afterwards.

As the proprietor and publisher of a Philadelphia newspaper Mr. Cobbett was in the habit of receiving newspapers from many towns and villages in the United States, from which he was able to glean some information of the state of society, and of the general improvement of the people in the habits of civilization; but amongst the greatest of all evils, which republicanism, and its attendant notions of equality, of levity, and insubordination had introduced into the American States, the most prevalent was, the disregard of the matrimonial tie. In most of the States, the law of divorce had been so altered, and the penalty attached to the crimes of bigamy and polygamy so softened in practice, at least, that the marriage ceremony and obligation were nearly become matters of form and resorted to, merely, in compliance with a custom, as the means of gratifying without scandal, that appetite, which is the most common to the human race.

Out of the facility of obtaining divorces grew their frequency, which in its turn, produced separations and elopements in such numbers, that the breaking up of a family from either of those causes, was at last scarcely ever regarded as a matter of reproach or of shame to the parties, who seldom appealed even to the law, or sought for any sanction of their breach of the most sacred of all engagements, except perchance, an advertisement in a newspaper, or in the form of a hand-bill. In the newspapers which Mr. Cobbett received, the advertisements of that kind were so thickly sown, that once out of curiosity, he directed one of his people, to cut out all such advertisements that they received in the several papers during the course of a month. They were accordingly cut out, and pasted upon a slip of paper close under each other. At the end of the month, the slip reached from the ceiling to the floor of a room more than ten feet high, and contained one hundred and twenty-three advertisements. When it is taken into consideration that Cobbett did not receive more than a

twentieth part of the newspapers published in the United States, and if a calculation be made from those facts, it would be found, that there were about twenty-five thousand divorces, separations and elopements in a year, which Mr. Cobbett assures, was very much within bounds.

As we make no doubt that the wives and husbands of this country may wish to be informed of the style and manner in which matters of this kind are transacted in America, and as a specimen of them, in case they should at any time have occasion to have recourse to so expeditious a method of getting rid of an unpleasant companion, we will give one or two of the advertisements, as preserved by Mr. Cobbett,

Whereas Deborah, that wicked wife of the subscriber, has eloped from my bed and board, this is to caution all persons from trusting or harbouring her on my account, as I shall pay no debts of her contracting. As she has asserted that she loves other men better than she does me, and has repeatedly slept with other men, since she has been married, and *she has the impudence to tell me, that she will again.*

Northwood Feb. 20, 1798.

PHILIP CHESLEY.

Whereas, I, the subscriber, for certain reasons, ~~think~~ it my incumbent duty for my own safety, and to preserve my property, to forbid all persons trusting and trading with Eunice Prince, my wife, now living at Plymouth in the county of Plymouth, as I am determined not to pay any debts of her contracting in future.

Plymouth, Feb. 7, 1798.

JAMES PRINCE.

Mrs. Eunice (query, *you nice*) Prince, it appears, however was by no means disposed to put up with this public indignity offered to her, for she immediately inserted the following answer:—

I, the subscriber, being troubled with a *tyrannical* companion, who, fearing I shall leave him, has thought

proper to forbid any person trusting me on his account, which I should have thought he would not have presumed to do, as I know of no property he possesses, except my own, and that no person in Plymouth would trust me on his account; I think it proper, as I have children depending on me for support, and wish to keep what little interest I have, to forbid any person trusting my husband, James Prince, on my account, as I will not pay any debts he may contract after this date.

Plymouth, Feb. 7, 1798.

EUNICE PRINCE.

Mr. Cobbett gives several specimens of these *dealings* on the part of the Americans, and he thence argues, though falsely, that the frequent elopements of the wives from their husbands, is not so much the woman's crime, as the state of society in which she lives, by which state of society he means republicanism. But, did Mr. Cobbett never peruse similar advertisements in newspapers, published under a monarchical government? and although they might not exactly reach, in one month, when cut out and pasted together, from the ceiling to the floor, yet a sufficient number could always be produced to show that the wives, whether under a republic or a monarchy, are pretty much the same sort of beings, and that elopements are common in the latter, as well as in the former. We must, therefore, look to some other cause than the form of government for these *egaremens* on the part of the ladies, and we opine, that it will not require the sagacity nor shrewdness of a Solon or a Socrates to arrive at once at the real cause.

Mr. Cobbett had been domiciliated about a year in his house, when he was called upon to enact some of the duties of a citizen of the United States, without having ever taken upon himself the character of a citizen. He says, "Next after the justices of the peace, or squires, the most troublesome animals in America, certainly are the mosquitoes and the militia officers, but the latter are by far the most troublesome of the two. In England, a man serves in the militia

once in his life-time, and he is no more pestered with it, but in that free country, America, he is a soldier as long as he can walk; he must attend muster every month in person, and find himself arms and accoutrements, or pay a fine for every failure. Besides this regular plague, every man is liable to be called out at an hour's notice, and to be marched as far as the caprice of the little despot, called a governor, chooses to march him. He can never say when he is to be called, or where he shall be sent to. The following are the copies of the notices that were served on Mr. Cobbett, in the city of Philadelphia:—

TAKE NOTICE, that you are enrolled in the 7th company of the 2nd regiment of the militia of the city of Philadelphia.

March 1797.

WILLIAM HEALY, *Captain*.

To William Cobbett.

TAKE NOTICE, that by special order of his excellency the governor, you are personally to appear at the State-house, properly armed and equipped for service, at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon, on Monday the 13th instant, *to march where required*.

Philadelphia, Nov. 1797.

LEWIS NICOLAS,

To William Cobbett.

Inspector.

“But,” says William Cobbett, “I hope it will not be imagined that I obeyed the summons of these wretches, I most certainly never did. I always threw them into the fire, the above two excepted, which I preserved for the express purpose of one day giving publicity to them. Nor did I pay a single fine. When they demanded fines from me, I refused to pay, and told the collector, that if he attempted to seize on my goods, I should plead my right of exception, as a British subject, and prosecute him for the seizure; but people in general were obliged to pay, or have their household goods seized and sold, or thrown away at auction, or in de-

fault of any chattels being to be found, the parties were sent to jail. In fact, so disgraceful was it to be seen amongst the rabble, called the militia, that hardly any man of credit would submit to it, and the whole establishment served no earthly purpose, but that of extorting money from the respectable part of the community, to be shared amongst a swarm of hungry, idle scoundrels, who lived by sucking the blood of the people."

The following is a most ludicrous specimen of a colonel of an American regiment of militia. It has been already noticed that William Cobbett had the honour to be enrolled in the 7th company of the 2nd regiment of the militia of the city of Philadelphia, which carries with it, it must be allowed, a most pompous and imposing sound, but it happened that the colonel of the said 2nd regiment of militia was the *tailor* of William Cobbett's clerk, at whose recommendation; he became also the tailor of Mr. Cobbett himself. As the colonel kept no journeyman, he came himself to measure Cobbett, upon which occasion, he gave him a note, of which the following is a copy, and which he did not think it at all beneath him to carry open in his hand to Mr. Cobbett's draper:—

To Mr. Wagner.

SIR,

Please to let my tailor, *Colonel Scott*, have two yards one eighth of blue cloth, one yard three quarters of kerseymere for breeches, and one yard for waistcoat, with as many buttons as he may want for the coat, and send a bill of the same to your,

Most humble,

Philadelphia, 5th June 1798.

And obedient servant,

WILLIAM COBBETT.

Mr. Cobbett, however, to do his colonel justice, observes, "that though a whipstitch, he was a man of most delicate honour, of which he gave a singular proof. Having managed his matters so well as to become insolvent, and being apprehensive that the cruel law, which then existed, would com-

pel him to go to jail for a few months, he went to the governor, *Mifflin*, who was, *ex officio*, his commander in chief, and asked him, whether a short confinement in jail would *injure his honour as a soldier*. "By no means," replied *Mifflin*, who was for many years kept from similar duranee, on a similar account, by nothing but the circumstance of his being governor. "And after this," asks Cobbett, "are there, can there be wretches impudent enough to extol republican governments?"

Cobbett always entertained a particular resentment against Mr. Bache the editor of the *Aurora*, who was in the pay of the French ambassador, and of course highly hostile to the principles openly avowed by Cobbett; for some time he allowed Bache to carry on his attacks, as if the British lion thought him unworthy of his notice; at last, the following passage appeared in the *Aurora*, as if from a correspondent:—

"In conversation a few days ago, the *British corporal* declared that he never would forgive the Americans for their rebellion against their king, and that he never would rest until they were reduced to their former obedience. If the fellow, whose back still exhibits the marks of his former virtue, should dare to deny this, it can be substantiated by undoubted evidence. After this speech, it may be well to repeat that Peter Porcupine is considered the champion of the federalists."

The reply of Cobbett to this attack, has not its parallel in the English language.

"Now pray, sir," says Cobbett, "is this of your manufacture, or is it really from a correspondent? if you own it for yours, I assert that you are a liar and an infamous scoundrel; if you do not, your correspondent has my free leave to take those appellations to himself.

"Having thus settled the point of courtesy, give me leave to ask you, my sweet, sleepy-eyed sir, what end you could propose to yourself in publishing, not only what you know to be a falsehood, but what you must, if you are not quite an idiot, perceive every one else would look upon as such. Do

you dread the effects of my paper, and do you imagine that a poor miserably-constructed falsehood of your publishing will tend to obstruct its success? If you do, you are egregiously mistaken. Not all that you, and your correspondents can say, not all the reports of your spies, nor all the assassinations of your Gallic friends, disposed of in bribes, will ever be able to rob me of a single subscriber.

"But I cannot for my life see, why you should wrangle with me, 'two of a trade can never agree.' Very true, but I hope in God, my trade is very different from yours. We are to be sure, both of us, news-mongers by profession, but then the articles, which you have for sale are very different from mine. Besides, you sell yours wholesale, a line which I shall be many years before I arrive at. Your exportation business too, is a branch that I am sure I shall never interfere with, and as to the give-away trade,* and which forms no contemptible portion of your commerce, and perhaps none of the least profitable, you may for me have the exclusive enjoyment of it for life; no one shall have my paper, who does not pay for it.

"Why then in the name of all that is rascally and corrupt, cannot you let me alone? I tell you what, Mr. Bache, you will get nothing by me in a war of words, so you may as well abandon the contest, while you can do it with a good grace. I do not wish, and I call on the public to remember what I say, I do not wish to fill my paper with personal satire and abuse, but I will not be insulted with impunity, and particularly by you. I have not forgotten your pointing

* This alludes to the bribery of Bache by the French ambassador, who purchased 300 of his gazette, to be distributed *gratis* amongst the people. The newspapers are not in America purchased in quantities, and distributed to the readers by newsmen. There are no persons of this description in that country; the proprietor distributes all his papers by the assistance of carriers, who, in going through the streets, can easily scatter their papers amongst the people unperceived. This was the practice of the French agents, who never failed to propagate amongst the people, those opinions, which they wished to see adopted.

out the propriety of describing my person, and hinting at the same time the dark purpose of so doing. I have not forgotten, that while a mob of vile infamous pamphleteers were barking round me, the grandson of old Franklin published a paragraph, setting forth the justice of cutting my throat; they thought they had laid me sprawling, and like a base cur, you came to have your snap like the rest. I have not forgotten all this, but I see no necessity for teasing the public with a repetition of it, and for the same reason, I wish to avoid all personality whatever. Our readers, and especially those of this city, know already every thing that is worth knowing about you and me, nothing that we can say will alter their opinions of us, and as for altering our opinions of one another, that is a thing not to be thought of. I am getting up in the world, and you are going down; for this reason it is that you hate me, and that I despise you, and that you will preserve your hatred, and I, my contempt, till fortune gives her wheel another turn, or till death snatches the one or the other of us from the scene.

"It is useless therefore, *my dear Bache*, to say any more about the matter. Why should we keep buffetting and spurring at each other? Why should we rend, and tear our poor reputations to pieces, merely for the diversion of the spectators? A great number of persons, rather lovers of fun, than of decency, have already pitted us, and are prepared to enjoy the combat; let us disappoint them, let us walk about arm in arm, many a couple, even of different sexes do this, and at the same time, like one another, no better than we do.

"Your pride may indeed reject the society of a British corporal, as you very justly style me, but, my dear sir, we are now both of the same honest calling. Nobody looks upon you as the grandson of a philosopher or an ambassador. People call you, *they do indeed*, Ben Bache, the newsman, nothing more I assure you; and as they have no regard to your illustrious descent, so you may be sure they will not long remember the meanness of mine.

"Once more, then I say, let us be friends. You will profit

from my conversation ; I shall convince you, as well by precepts as example, that it is a folly for a man to print papers and throw them about the streets.

"As I began this letter, without ceremony, so I shall end it.

PETER PORCUPINE."

About the time that Mr. Cobbett entered into the bookselling business, a publication appeared, entitled, "Christianity contrasted with Deism, by Peter Porcupine;" this attack on the Christian religion, was first published at New York, and the fictitious name, which Cobbett had long before assumed, was placed to it, either to discredit his performances, or for the more innocent purpose of promoting the sale of the work. Cobbett immediately denied being the author of it, and it died away; its demerit in point of style, as well as matter, was its passport to oblivion. However, to answer some end or other, Cobbett was scarcely well seated in his new establishment, than it was revived, and very industriously circulated, principally by individuals, who wished to bring Cobbett into disrepute.

"Now," says Cobbett, "merely as a bookseller's puff, I can have no objection to the use of my assumed name, it is on the contrary, rather flattering to my vanity as an author, to observe that the assumption is looked upon as a recommendation to purchasers, more especially, as the title is merely equivocal, for no-one can tell by it, whether the contrast be favourable to Christianity or not. But in the other point of view, looking on the use of my name, as intending to fix the odium of the detestable performance upon me, I have very great objections to it. I would lie under any other imputation, that can possibly spring from the fertile brain of disappointed malice, rather than that of endeavouring to sap the foundation of the christian faith; the rock to which we all cling in the hour of distress, and without which, the idea of death, or even the remotest symptom of mortal disease, appals the stoutest heart.

"In the rigid sense of the term," continues Cobbett, "I

am certainly very far from being a Christian. I feel the dominion of the turbulent passions ; when my coat is taken from me, I cannot give my cloak : nor does a buffet on one cheek, incline me patiently to turn the other. But, as far as professions can go, whether verbally or in writing, I trust I have some pretensions to that character. Let any one examine my publications from the first to the last, and say, if he can, that they contain even a hint that leads towards infidelity. Whatever ill qualities I may possess, that of hypocrisy is not one of them, every body will allow. Had I been a Deist, I should have declared it long ago. It is impossible for me to suppress the utterance of what I think. Those, who have read the strictures on Tom Paine's Age of Reason, on the doctrines of Priestly, and on the impious proceedings of the French assemblies, will do well to compare them with the other parts of my writings, and then judge, whether it be possible for the same man to be at once capable of such profound dissimulation, and such indiscreet openness.

"But the work in question carries on the face of it the marks of imposture. Had I actually written it, can it be supposed that I would have put that very name to it, under which I had used all my feeble efforts to discountenance, and reprobate the opinions it inculcates ? Had I been hypocrite enough to write in defence of a religion, that I did not believe in, would not the same hypocrisy have taught me to assume another name, when I began to attack it ? to suppose the contrary is an absurdity too gross to merit exposition.

"The fact is, this impious effusion of some illiterate, democratic demon, is now trumped up in the hope of opposing the progress of my paper. The discomfited crew are rallying their broken and dispersed columns. Lies, slanders, and menaces have failed ; the use of a name that they hate, and dread more than they do hell, has at last been resorted to. The desperateness of the step proves to what despair they are reduced.

"Either the name of Peter Porcupine was taken up by this writer, to promote the sale of his pamphlet, or it was done to

injure me in the opinion of my friends; if for the former purpose, it proves that the name is of more value than that of the real author; and if for the latter, it proves that the democrats, after their railing, look upon my friends as being the most pious and conscientious part of the community. What their friends are then, need not be added."

The arrival of Thomas Paine in America in July 1797, was an important era in the life of Cobbett, for it roused every dormant passion of his breast, which vented itself in a train of invectives scarcely to be paralleled in the writings of any author living or dead. It may be well to bear in mind the following singular production of Cobbett, when in a few years after its appearance, we shall have to exhibit him in a wholly opposite character. On the announcement of the arrival of Paine, Cobbett says, "Now my time is come to attack your Age of Reason. When encountered face to face, you may defend yourself if you think proper, and have no reason to complain of foul play. The treatment, which I intend to give you, shall accord with your deserts, that is, I shall consider you a *profane fool*, and if you offer anything in your vindication, I am willing to hear it."

PAINE. It has been my intention for several years past to publish my thoughts on religion.

COBBETT. Your motives are pretty well known. You wrote the first part of your Age of Reason to save your *ugly head* from the guillotine, and the second part to procure you a little something to eat.

PAINE. The circumstance that has now taken place in France, has rendered a work of this kind *exceedingly necessary*, lest in the general wreck of superstition, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology, which is true.

COBBETT. You offer wonders of inconsistency for our digestion. We are to believe you on your word, that we, infallible men of reason, having the Bible of creation, as you call it, constantly before our noses, are, notwithstanding our omniscience, in imminent danger of losing sight even of morality, humanity, and theology. That a work, a written book

on religion is not only necessary, but even exceedingly necessary for our preservation. That our Creator has not provided for such a work, but has abandoned mankind to the pernicious effects of seduction and immorality; that he is surpassed in benevolence by you, and that he left the fabrication of a work exceedingly necessary in a moral point of view, to the care of poor silly Tom Paine; the Deists may believe this article of your faith, if they choose, but certainly I shall not believe it.

PAINE. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and in order to qualify himself for that trade, he begins with perjury.

COBBETT. This is a gloomy, but it may be an exact delineation of your own heart. We are told by a certain Mr. Oldys, that you have been frequently guilty of perjury, that you tried for the priesthood, and were rejected; that your itch of preaching was so great, that for a time, you went screeching about as an itinerant preacher among the Methodists. This is probably the principal cause of your malevolency, you aimed at the priesthood, and could not obtain it. The grapes are sour, said the fox, when he could not reach them. From your disappointment, the acrimony which you manifest against the priests, may be sufficiently explained. Now you argue in the manner of the thieves and pickpockets, who surmise, from a consciousness of their own dishonesty, that all the world are dishonest. A prostitute will hardly believe that any woman is chaste, nor you, from a knowledge of your insincerity, that any priest is sincere. But the French priests have saved the honour of the clergy, by a confutation of your calumnies with their blood. At the time, that you wrote your book; at the time, that you, pitiful wretch, denied the Lord, who bought you, in order to save your life at the expense of your salvation, at that time, thousands of them suffered their throats to be cut, for the sake of a good con-

science. As they have done, the Christian priests of every country will do, when the hour of trial shall come, and such actions as these cannot be obscured by the ravings of an apostate and debauchee.

PAINE. As several of my colleagues, and others of my fellow citizens of France, have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I will also make mine.

COBBETT. You were a citizen of France then, though you denied it in your letter to General Washington. A liar ought to have a good memory. But as to the circumstance of your profession of faith, that is pleasant, as we shall enjoy the opportunity of observing the apish grimaces of a French legislator saying his creed.

PAINE. I believe in one God, and no more.

COBBETT. What do you call the God that you believe in? Is it whiskey punch, or Madeira wine? It appears like rebellion against the majesty of reason, to hear a sot talk of his believing in God. But as the God described by the modern Deists, seems to be a deified devil, in such a one you may possibly believe.

PAINE. I hope for happiness beyond this life.

COBBETT. Reason awards happiness only to the virtuous, and, therefore, your hope is ridiculous in the extreme. Certainly that heaven must be a proper hogstye, where such swine as you will find admittance.

PAINE. I believe in the equality of man.

COBBETT. If you kept a negro wench for your concubine, your faith in this respect may be very natural.

PAINE. I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow creatures happy.

COBBETT. Yes, in endeavouring to make your fellow creatures happy, but the remark must not be forgotten, that the only fellow creatures, the majority of the modern Deists seem to have, are the strumpety inhabitants of the common stews. As to your justice and mercy, your creditors, your

wives, and the sentence which passed on the king of France, may witness to these. To hear you talk of justice and mercy, is like hearing a prostitute preaching up the virtue of chastity,

PAINE. We cannot serve God in the manner, we serve those, who cannot do without such service.

COBBETT. We know it Tom, we know it, that we cannot serve God in the manner we serve those, who cannot do without such service. We cannot, for instance, serve him with ragouts and soups, we cannot plaster his feet, nor pull his teeth; but does it follow, that because we cannot serve him in this manner, we cannot, and shall not serve him in any manner? And such a blockhead as you, who will frame such objections as these, will undertake to write upon religion?

PAINE. The only idea we can have of serving God, is that of contributing to the happiness of the living creation that God has made.

COBBETT. But what do you mean by happiness? Is it the knowledge of God and of his will? Is it confidence in God; rectitude of volition and action; peace of conscience, and a well-founded hope of future felicity? You well know that such a happiness, and such a mode of contributing to the happiness of ourselves and others, are very foreign from the purpose of Deism. Indeed, it is disgusting to hear a bloodhound, who contrary to every principle of law and justice, pronounced the sentence of condemnation and banishment of an innocent king, speaking of contributing happiness and serving God. What sort of a Being must that God be, who would number such wretches among his servants?

PAINE. I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

COBBETT. It sounds like madness to hear a man talk of believing in a creed; a little more madness, and you will

be a downright ass, for already you have one and the same faith with your horse on the common. Your horse does not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church. His own mind is his own church, and we wish you fortune to your horse faith.

PAINÉ. The Christian despises the choicest gifts of God to man, the gift of reason, and having endeavoured to force upon himself the belief of a system against which reason revolts, he ungratefully calls it human reason, as if man could give reason to himself.

COBBETT. From the same principles, you may argue that your posteriors are not human, but something divine, and possibly in time the Deists may deify their posteriors, they are, you know, a choice gift of God to man, and a necessary part of the human body; likewise you know, that a man could not give the posteriors to himself, consequently, according to your logic, he ought not ungratefully to call it the *human posteriors*; do you see that you are a blockhead and an ass?

After experiencing so many lies, sophisms, and prevanications, in order to demolish the Christian religion, you certainly ought to have offered something better in its stead. Where is the sense in combating a religion, calculated to console the afflicted, to administer hope to the dying, and to regenerate the heart, when a better is not produced? Not all men are so infatuated as to exchange their religion for none, or for a worse. You may gull libertines and strumpets with that system of impiety, plagiarism, and nonsense, which you oppose to Christianity, but you will not gull men of understanding and virtue.

PAINÉ. Pure simple Deism.

COBBETT. What is pure simple Deism? Being an impostor, you imitate all other impostors in the use of vague and undefined words. Deism with the great portion of the modern infidels, is only another word for demonism, and denotes a religion fitted for cut-throats, revolutionists, and

rogues, and pretty generally received by people of that description. But should you unexpectedly mean that system of theology and ethics, deducible by human reason from the phenomena of nature, and the actual constitution of things, then you ought to know that this is nothing new. It is the old theology professed by the Christians from the very commencement of Christianity, and being a part, cannot confront our faith. Which is deserving of the greater degree of admiration, your ignorance or your dishonesty?

PAINE. The true Deist has but one Deity.

COBBETT. And you ought to add, they borrow this notion from the Bible. Were the Deists put to the necessity of demonstrating the unity of God, from nature and reason, they would stand like a company of conies when the drum is a beating. You had better try it, Tom, since your hand is in, and we will hear you repeat those whining ejaculations over again, which you made when proving that there is no God; "Difficult, incomprehensibly difficult, difficult beyond description." He that will undertake to demonstrate that doctrine, from the harmony and unity of the plan existing in nature, (and this is the only philosophical argument that is worthy of nature;) must necessarily possess a universal and accurate knowledge of nature; and then his demonstration will only amount to presumptive proof. Considering the difficulty of proving the unity of God from nature, it is plain beyond contradiction, that without the light of revelation, the great mass of mankind would always remain immersed in the gulf of Pantheism or Idolatry, and such blockheads as you are would not reclaim them.

PAINE. The religion of the Deist consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of the Deity in his works, and in endeavouring to imitate him in every thing that is moral, scientific and mechanical.

COBBETT. Here again you act the plagiarist, decorating your system with plumes plucked from the body of the Bible. The Christians know that they ought to contemplate the perfection of the Deity, and to imitate him in a moral view,

for such are the plain enjoinders of revelation, but rob them of this, and they will dispute the principle. Tell us philosophically, why we are to contemplate and to imitate the Deity? who has imposed such an obligation, and where is it expressed? and what are the consequences in case of compliance or non-compliance? prove those principles from nature and reason, and you have fixed yourself in a proper dilemma. If they be a portion of the law of reason, as I think they are, then they certainly are immutable and indispensable, and everlasting happiness depends upon their perfect observance, in case there be no redemption. So you must either deny the moral principle and its necessity, or admit that a redemption is necessary, as there exist thousands of men who have acted contrary to that principle, and are left without hope by your scheme. Do you observe how you wound your cause? The Deist always acts inconsistently, and plays the fool, betraying his own system, except when he denies every moral obligation, and transforms mankind into a society of devils. And what do you mean by the requisition, that we are to imitate God in every thing that is *scientific*? In what sense may science be ascribed to the Omniscient? How in every thing *mechanical*? Wonderful indeed are the religion and the wisdom of the Deists! We never knew before that God Almighty is a mechanic, or that any of the phenomena of nature can be accounted for on the principles of mechanism. This grand discovery was from the beginning of the world to this day, reserved for the superlative sagacity of red nosed-Tom, who possesses the impudence of opposing such deliriums to Christianity.

PAINÉ. The Almighty is the great mechanic of the creation; the first philosopher and the original teacher of all science.

COBBETT. You have already dishonoured the Almighty with so many degrading appellations, that we shall not be surprised to hear you represent him as the great clock maker, house carpenter, tailor, and shoemaker of the creation; or to hear you describe him as a metaphysician, dissector, and

frog-catcher, or as a teacher of arithmetic, weaving, and fencing. But before you proceed in this raving career, we wish you to explain the phenomena of attraction, gravity, or muscular motion upon the principles of mechanism; the trial may happily cure you of your frenzy.

PAINE. If we consider the nature of our condition here, we might see there is no occasion for such a thing as a revealed religion.

COBBETT. Or rather a very great occasion, as the irreligious madmen, who now call God a philosopher and a mechanic, may after describe him as a bear or a wolf.

PAINE. What is it we want to know?

COBBETT. The conditions of amendment and pardon, according to the law of reason, commonly called the law of nature, though improperly; and with infinite justice, the original and the end of the natural and moral evils existing in this world: the mode of perceptive knowledge and consciousness after the death of the body. Here is fodder for your free thinking.

PAINE. Does not the creation, the universe we behold, preach to us the existence of a mighty power that governs and regulates the whole? and is not the evidence that this creation holds out to our senses, infinitely stronger than any thing we can read in a book?

COBBETT. You are just as ignorant in philosophy as in religion, and only remarkable for your swaggering; else you would know that the notion of a creation is purely an article of revealed faith, and not demonstrable by human reason. We may conceive a fabrication of the universe from pre-existent matter, but we cannot form a conception of a creation that is a production of the universe from nothing. Hence it is, that a great portion of mankind has ever remained ignorant of a creator and a creation. The Greeks dated the origin of the gods and men from a chaos, and the Chinese are generally Pantheists or Polytheists. To believe heavenly beings superior to men is a common notion with the heathen nations, but this notion is far short of the idea of a God exist-

ing as creator and ruler of the universe. So your work must be done over again; men must be informed of a creation, before they can conclude anything from it, and for such an information, the Bible was necessary. But to proceed: I believe the almighty power of God, but not on the strength of your representation. Almighty power and infinite power are certainly one and the same thing, and the universe does not preach or evidence such a power, because the universe is not an infinite, but only a finite thing. Here is something, Tom, to try your force on philosophy. Shall we admit a greater power in the cause, than is sufficient to explain the effect? our solar system, for example, is an object of vast but not of infinite magnitude. Conceive to yourself an infinite number of such systems, standing in contiguity, what would they form? only a single line of infinite length, but measurable in its diameter, and the great portion of infinite space would remain an empty void; consequently it is truth, and demonstrable from algebra, that an infinite number of finite things, however great, will not constitute an infinity of magnitude, and that their production may require a great, but not an infinite power. The universe, therefore, not being infinite in magnitude, is not a full and adequate expression of the infinite power of God, and if creation and regulation are the only exertions of his power, then the great portion of that has ever lain dormant and unexerted. Christianity alone solves this difficulty, teaching the eternal emanation of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, as an adequate exertion of infinite power. When you again introduce a preaching universe, let it preach truth and reason, and do not pollute its tongue with the foolish fripperies of your deism.

PAINÉ. As for morality, the knowledge of it exists in every man's conscience.

COBBETT. Stomach, you may possibly mean, as your morality appears to have its seat in your stomach. Be honest for once, and confess to the truth, that you apostatized for the sake of your belly. Do you know what conscience is? The consciousness which every man possesses of his own

notions respecting right and wrong, and of the relations which his actions bear to such notions. The knowledge of morality with you then, is the consciousness of moral knowledge, or in other words, to know morality, is knowingly to know it. This foolish jingle on words you propose for a rule of action, according to which men are to conduct themselves. From this sample we may judge of your moral knowledge, and of the worth of your religion. Conscience is not a rule of conduct, because it accommodates itself to the opinions of men, and even to their errors. It permits the Chinese to expose his children, the Otaheitan to offer human sacrifices, the French Directory to pillage, burn, and massacre, and you, Tom, it permits you to act the impostor, the liar, and the disturber of mankind.

In giving the foregoing disquisition we have only performed the duty of the impartial biographer, in rescuing the character of the individual whose life and opinions we are relating, from those aspersions which malice or ignorance may have attempted to cast upon it. There are a number of people who, even at the present day, hold up Cobbett to the public reproach as a confirmed infidel. But where is it found in any of his writings? and still more forcibly we may ask, where is it to be found in the general tenor of his conduct? It is too much the custom of the insensate and unreflecting crowd, to hold up all men who profess an extreme liberality of opinion, as deists, infidels, revolutionists, as wholesale dealers in irreligion and blasphemy, and as the general pests of society; but in the case of Cobbett, it was the determination of a particular party to put him down, however mean, despicable, and dishonourable might be the steps adopted to accomplish their malignant purpose. The charge of infidelity, it was well known, would raise up against him a host of enemies, who cared very little for the tendency of his political principles, for to them it was a matter of mere secondary consideration, whether he was a royalist or a republican, but if they could once raise up against him the war whoop of infidelity, then his reputation, his consequence, and his influence

would soon dwindle away, and end in his positive ruin. We do not mean to say, that in the supposed dialogue between Cobbett and Paine, there are not many sentiments, uttered by the former, which will not stand the test of philosophical discussion, founded on truth and reason, but a sufficiency has been shown to demonstrate, that with whatever other opprobrious epithets the enemies of Cobbett might be pleased to visit him, he did not deserve that of the Deist or the Infidel.

It was not to be expected, but that the strong and forcible language which Cobbett made use of in his gazette, against all those who showed themselves as enemies to his country, would, sooner or later, draw down upon him the full vengeance of the democratic party, who were constantly on the alert to catch hold of some act of Cobbett, either in his editorial or private character, by which his ruin could be accomplished. When he undertook to publish a daily paper, it was with the intention of annihilating, if possible, the intriguing, wicked, and indefatigable faction which the French had formed in America. He was fully aware of the arduousness of the task, as well as the inconvenience and danger to which it would expose both himself and his family. He was prepared to meet the rancorous vengeance of his enemies in the hour of their triumph, and the coolness of his friends in the hour of his peril; in short, to acquire riches appeared to be quite uncertain, and to be stripped of every farthing of his property seemed extremely probable; but let what would happen, he was resolved to pursue the object which he had in contemplation, so long as there remained the most distant probability of success.

Among the dangers which presented themselves to him, those to be apprehended from the severity of the law appeared the most formidable, more especially as he happened to be situated in the state of Pennsylvania, where the government, generally speaking, was in the hands of those who had, and sometimes with great indecency, manifested a uniform opposition to the ministers and measures of the federal government. These persons, he knew he had offended by the

promulgation of disagreeable truths, and therefore it was natural that he should seek for some standard as a safe rule for his conduct with respect to the *liberty of the press*.

To set about the study of the law of libels, to wade through fifty volumes of mysterious tautology, was what he had neither time nor patience to perform. The English press was said to be enslaved, but when he came to consult the practice of this enslaved press, he found it still to be far *too free* for him to attempt to follow its example. Finally, it appeared to him to be the safest way to form to himself some rule founded on the liberty of the American press. He concluded that he might go as great lengths in attacking the enemies of the country, as others went in attacking its friends, that as much zeal might be shown in defending the general administration, as in accusing and traducing them; and that as great warmth would be admissible in the cause of virtue, order, and religion, as had long been tolerated in the wicked cause of villany, insurrection, and blasphemy. Whatever rancour might be harboured against him in the breasts of particular persons, he depended on shame to restrain the arm of power from partiality. He thought no officer or officers of the state, would in America dare to act towards an honest man with a rigour, which had never been experienced by the vilest miscreants. Alas! all this he thought, and all he thought, was wrong.

Previously to entering upon the account of the groundless prosecution, which the arbitrary state government of Pennsylvania compelled Mr. Cobbett to sustain, it will be necessary to notice some steps that were taken by his enemies previously thereto.

Some time in the month of August 1797, the Spanish minister Don Carlos Martinez de Yrujo applied to the federal government to prosecute Mr. Cobbett as the editor of the Porcupine Gazette, for certain matters published in that paper against himself, and that poor, unfortunate, drivelling, and humbled mortal, Charles the Fourth, king of Spain. The government consented, and Cobbett was accordingly

bound over before the honourable judge Peters, to appear in the federal district court, which was to meet in the ensuing April.

Of this preparatory step to a fair and impartial trial, Don Carlos was informed, but it would seem the information was far from being satisfactory to him, for he delivered in a memorial to the federal government, requesting that the trial might come on before the supreme court of Pennsylvania, of which court Mc'Kean was chief justice. The document is curious which Cobbett has left behind him, of the *character* of this judge, who was to try him for the libel on the haughty Spanish minister.

"The grandfather of Mc'Kean was an Irishman, who *emigrated* by the consent of his majesty, *and twelve good and true men*. He himself was born in America, in Chester county, and was for some time a hostler, then successively a constable, a sheriff, a justice of the peace, and a petty-logger, in which last capacity, the revolutionists found him a man fit for their purposes. It was Mc'Kean who was guilty of the legal murder of the two quakers, Roberts and Carlisle; he has been a persecutor of this inoffensive sect from that day to this. He was the principal promoter of all the cruel laws and confiscations in Pennsylvania, and he now lives in a confiscated house. His private character is infamous; he beats his wife, and she beats him. He ordered a wig to be imported for him by Mr. Kid, refused to pay for it, was sued before the mayor's court; the dispute was referred to the court of *Nisi prius*, where merely for the want of the original invoice which Kid had lost, the judge came off victorious. He is a notorious drunkard. The whole bar, one lawyer excepted, signed a memorial, stating that so great a drunkard was he, that after dinner, person and property were not safe in Pennsylvania. He has been horsewhipped in the city tavern, and kicked in the street for his insolence to particular persons, and yet this degraded wretch is chief justice of the state."

The reason of the Spanish minister being anxious to get

Cobbett tried before this Mc'Kean was evident, for it was well known that "the upright judge" harboured a mortal rancour against him for the just censure he had received at his hands; and it was further known that this very Spanish minister, a most contemptible animal, was on the eve of being married to Mc'Kean's daughter. Such were the reasons why the federal government was requested to suffer the cause to be tried before Mc'Kean, and why a new prosecution was set on foot.

Foiled in their grand object, a new scrutiny was without much regard to decency set on foot; new pretended libels were hunted out, and an application to prosecute the daring editor of the gazette was made to the government of Pennsylvania. It is scarcely necessary to state that consent was speedily obtained. A bill of indictment was preferred by the attorney general of the state, and a warrant, of which the following is a copy, was issued to seize Mr. Cobbett.

Pennsylvania. SS. } The commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 (Seal.) } to the sheriff of the county of Philadel-
 } phia, to the constable of the city of
 } Philadelphia, and to all other *our* minis-
 } ters and officers within *our* said city
 } and county, greeting.

FORASMUCH as the chief justice of our supreme court is given to understand by the information, testimony and complaints of credible persons, that WILLIAM COBBETT of the city of Philadelphia, printer, is the printer and publisher of certain infamous and wicked libels against his catholic majesty the king of Spain, the Chevalier Charles Martinez Yrujo, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of his said catholic majesty to the United States of America and of the Spanish nation, contained in public journals, or newspapers called Porcupine's Gazette, numbers 114, 115, 121, 127, 156, 160, 163, and 180, in the said city of Philadelphia, tending to

defame the said king, envoy and minister, and subjects of the said king, to alienate their affections and regards from the government and citizens of the United States of America, and of us; to excite them to hatred, hostilities and war against the United States :

Therefore we command you, and every of you, that some or one of you attach the said William Cobbett, so that you have him *as soon as he can be taken* before our said chief justice to answer us of the premises, and be further dealt with according to law, and have you there then this precept.

Witness the HONOURABLE Thomas Mc’Kean, Doctor of Laws, Chief Justice of our Supreme Court of Philadelphia.

The trifling circumstances attending an arrest and giving bail are scarcely worth relating, but sometimes trifling circumstances serve to convey a more correct idea of the character of the parties concerned in a transaction, and to guide the reader to a more just appreciation of their motives, than the longest and most laboured general account of their conduct.

The sheriff came to Mr. Cobbett’s house *for the first time* at twelve o’clock, and he was ordered to have him before the judge *at half-past one*. “Thank God,” says Cobbett, “I am not versed in the law of arrests, but I believe this is the first time that a man prosecuted for a libel was penned down to the short space of an hour and a half to prepare for going out to procure himself bail.” However, he was not so destitute of friends as perhaps the judge expected he was; the bail was procured, and Cobbett appeared before the judge at the appointed time.

On entering, he invited Cobbett to sit down, and he accordingly seated himself on one side of the fire, the judge seating himself on the other; after he had talked on for some time to very little purpose, at least as to the effect his talk produced on Peter Porcupine, he showed him certain newspapers,

and asked him if he had printed and published them? To this Cobbett replied, that the law did not require him to answer any questions in that stage of the business, and that therefore he should not do it. At this reply, though a very prudent and a very proper one, "he waxed exceeding wrath:" he ordered him instantly to get off his chair and stand up before him, though he himself had invited him to sit down, a specimen of refinement and good manners, which could not fail to exalt the judge in the estimation of Cobbett.

The next curious document which follows in due course, is the bill of indictment. Of this bill, Cobbett says, "go over it with attention, I beseech thee, reader, or else take my word for it, you will be just as wise when you have done, as you are now; you must have your eyes well about you; keep a sharp look-out for parentheses and quotations, and above all, you must hold your breath to the bottom of a paragraph; if you cannot do this, you will no more understand it than you would the croaking of a frog, or the cackling of a goose, therefore, again I say, 'attention!'"

It would occupy too great a space in our pages to give this memorable bill of indictment at full, and therefore, we shall merely confine ourselves to the exhibition of those sentences on which the prosecution against Mr. Cobbett was founded; it may also serve as a pattern to certain individuals in this country, who prefer their bills of indictment for libels against their character, having no other method of proving to the public, that they have no character to lose.

The libels were published in Poreupine's Gazette in the forms of observations signed by an old soldier, and in which amongst other *things* and *expressions* are contained divers of false, feigned, scandalous, and malicious matters, *according to the tenor following, to wit:*

"Ever since Spain has been governed by princes of the Bourbon family, the Spanish name has been disgraced in peace and in war; every important measure has been directed by the crooked politics of France. Their connexion, like the obscene harpies of old, contaminates whatever it touche

But never has this been so conspicuous as in the present reign, and more especially at the present period. The degenerate prince that now sways the Spanish sceptre (*thereby meaning his catholic majesty, the said king of Spain*) whom the French (*the French republic meaning*) have kept on the throne merely as a trophy of their power, or as the butt of their insolence, seems destitute not only of the dignity of a king, but of the common virtues of a man; not content with allying himself to the murderers of a benevolent prince, who was the flower of his family, he (*his catholic majesty the said king of Spain meaning*) has become the supple tool of all their (*the said French republic meaning*) most nefarious politics. As the sovereign (*his catholic majesty the said king of Spain meaning*) is at home, so is the minister abroad (*meaning the said Don Carlos Martínez de Yrujo, the said minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary from his said catholic majesty the said king of Spain to the United States*) the one (*meaning his catholic majesty the said king of Spain*) is governed like a dependant, by the nod of the five despots at Paris, and the other (*meaning the said Don Carlos Martínez de Yrujo, the said minister plenipotentiary from his said catholic majesty,*) by the direction of the French agents in America. Because those infidel tyrants (*the French republic and their agents meaning*) had thought proper to rob and insult this country and its government, and we have thought proper, I am sorry to add, to submit to it, the obsequious imitative Don (*the said Don Carlos Martínez de Yrujo meaning*) must attempt the same in order to participate in the guilt, and lessen the infamy of his masters (*the French republic and their agents meaning.*"')

The foregoing specimen will show the nature of this celebrated bill of indictment, but the charges which it contains lie buried in such a multitude of words which *mean* nothing, although there be no lack of *meaning* in them, that they are very difficult to be understood. Some one says of a man extremely verbose in his conversation, that his wit is like three grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff, and exactly the same

may be said with truth of the meaning of this bill. The three libels as they are called, and which are too voluminous to be given in these pages, might all have been contained in a quarter of a page, whereas the bill is swelled out to three or four pages; however, the drawing of it goes to show that America is cursed with a set of creatures, styled attornies, in the same manner as this law ridden country. Cobbett himself speaking of this bill of indictment, says, "however insignificant it may be in itself, it has already made a considerable noise in the world, and it will yet make a great deal more. Papers of this sort generally travel from the court to the clerk's office, and there they lodge in eternal sleep. But this bill is certainly destined to another fate. Neptune will lend her waves, and Eolus his winds to conduct it over the deep. It will see climes, that the inventors of it never saw, nor ever will see. Little did they imagine, that they were becoming *authors*, and authors of such celebrity too, as if it please God, I will render them."

Of the three publications in which the libels were contained, it may be requisite to mention, that two of them only *originated* in Cobbett's *gazette*, and the other was taken from the *gazette* of the United States, published by Mr. Fenno. The writer of the latter, Cobbett kept for nearly three years a secret, but when all danger from the disclosure of the name of the author was removed, he openly announced that it was written by an American of the name of Sitgreaves, brother of the Samuel Sitgreaves, who was one of the famous board of commissioners for the settlement of British debts.

Of the two publications which originated in his *gazette*, Cobbett wholly disowns having the honour of being the writer, having been both written by two gentlemen of Philadelphia, native Americans, men who were determined whigs during the war for independence, republicans in principle, and firmly attached to the then existing government.

We would not willingly cast an imputation upon Mr. Cobbett, of wilfully misleading the public as to the author of the two publications which appeared in his *gazette*, and on

which the bill of indictment was found, nor of the communication which was *supposed* to be sent by *an old soldier*, and which was published in the Censor for November 1796, just after the appeal of the French minister, Adet, when the city of Philadelphia rang with the daring, the degrading, the contemptuous insult, which the Spaniard, Yrujo, had offered to the government of America, and to every individual living under it. When, however, a person undertakes a piece of business in which he does not wish to be known as the actor or agent, he generally puts on some disguise to prevent him being recognized; but this was not the case with Cobbett, for publicly and openly as he might declare that the letter published in the Censor for November 1796, and the two communications which appeared in his *gazette*, and which he affirms to have been written by two gentlemen of the city of Philadelphia, were not written by him; it is totally impossible for any one to read either of those publications, without discovering the hand and mind of Cobbett in every page of them. The following specimens will fully bear us out in the confirmation of our opinion.

"To express a hatred to the government, and affect friendship for the people who live under it, and thus arraign the former at the bar of the latter, is the unbearable tone which the despots of Paris have assumed to all the nations of Europe, and at last it is come to the turn of America. They did not declare war against the Germans, the English, and the Dutch, but against the emperor, the king of England, and the stadtholder. The Germans and the English did not believe them; they knew them of old. The Dutch sucked in the bait, and now they know them too. *God send they may squeeze them to the size of shotten herrings, that they may not leave even a frog to sport in their canals, that they may eat up the very herbage like the locusts in Egypt.* These poor degraded devils, who never ceased their clamours for liberty and equality till they had driven into exile the princely family of Orange, to whom they owed the birth and the preservation of their real liberties, their riches, and their

power, are now obliged to yield their houses, and even their beds, to the filthy, ragamuffin sans culottes."

Speaking of the reception of the American flag by the French Convention, when, according to the report of citizen Adet, *tears trickled from every eye*, the old soldier says, "The trickling tears of the convention at the sight of a bit of lindsay-woolsey, puts me in mind of Marc Antony, and his mob of blubbering plebeians, 'Kind souls,' says he, 'do you weep at the sight of Cæsar's garment only, what will you do then when you see Cæsar himself?' upon which he shows them the corpse, and *the rascals, who would have knocked his brains out if he had not been dead, began bellowing like so many town bulls round a buzom heifer*. If they could have got Cæsar himself under their clutches, they would have completed the farce of the crocodile, dried up their tears, and fell to cracking our bones."

Who can read the following and not discover the pen of Cobbett in every sentiment which the passage is meant to convey, "Who would have thought while they were weeping over our flag, and sending theirs to be wept over here, and writing *love letters* to the Congress, and sending us their new plan for weighing bread and butter by sines and tangants, *Lord curse them!* who would have thought, I say, while all this loving mummary was going forward, *while they were hugging, and squeezing, and slaving over with snuff and foam* their dear American brethren, who would have thought that no less than seven heads of accusation lay rankling in their bosom? 'A friend,' says citizen Adet, 'injured by a friend, may safely complain without fear of giving offence.' Yes, but then he must complain like a friend, and not like a bully. He must not talk of his horsewhip, or his cane. He must not come with *terror* in his mouth, or friendship takes its flight, and resentment succeeds. Besides, a friend injured by a friend complains at once, he does not treasure up the injury in his mind, and reserve it for the day of his strength. He does not hug, and kiss, and hang on the neck of his friend, and weep for joy at the sight of his

garment, he does not keep up this farce for four long years, and at last, when he sees that hypocrisy avails him nothing, come and rip up his grievances, and threaten vengeance. This is not the conduct of an injured friend, but that of an *insidious d—d Iago*, as I call the French, for such they have been, and will be to this and every other country that has the folly to place any dependence on their friendship."

In relation to the Directory of France, the old soldier says, "I wonder what sort of fellows this Directory, as they call it, is composed of, whether they are shaped like gods or devils, or what they are like, that they should dare to talk in this manner to an independent nation, that they have no more power over, than they have over Heaven. What a poor beggarly puff, for a man as much fit to be a president as I am to be an archbishop. A man, who is a Deist by profession, a philosopher by trade, and a Frenchman in politics and morality; a man, who has written a passport for Tom Paine's Rights of Man, and would if necessary, write another for his infamous letter to General Washington; a man in short, who is at the head of the prostituted party, by whose intrigues he has been brought forward and is supported. If this man is elected president, the country is sold to the French, *and as plantations are generally sold with the live stock on them, I shall remove my carcass, for I am resolved never to become their property. I do not wish my family soul to be in the guts of cannibals.*"

If any further proof were wanting that the letter which appeared in the Censor, and disowned by Cobbett as being the author of it, was in reality written by himself, and that no one but Cobbett could write it, the following must carry conviction to even the most sceptical mind.

"When I was a little boy, my elder brother, in order to get my share of the apple pudding, used to say, 'PETER, I order you to eat.' That very instant my jaws refused their functions, and the morsel stuck in my throat. To be sure I was a most obstinate dog, and I am inclined to think

that the Mounseers will find their dear little Miss America to be much about the same temper."

The style of Cobbett like that of Sterne, may be imitated, but its originality and peculiarity will always remain so determined, that it never can be mistaken, however true and faithful the copy may be. It therefore appears most strange, with the knowledge which Cobbett must have possessed, and did possess, of the original character of his writings, that he should ever have attempted to attribute the authorship of a letter written by himself to any other individual. The detection could not fail to be made, before a single page of it had been read, and his character naturally sustained a shock from his manifest disposition to mislead the public.

We have been led into this digressive matter, for the purpose of showing that two of the publications in which the libels appeared, for which the bill of indictment was preferred against Cobbett, were in fact written by himself, although he avers that they were written by two American gentlemen. How comes it that he did not give us the names of those two gentlemen, as he did of the writer of the letter in the gazette of the United States; besides, there is very little doubt, but that it was the almost certainty, that Cobbett was himself the author of them, that excited the vengeance of his enemies to such an extraordinary degree.

The day at length arrived when the bill of indictment was to be laid before the grand jury, to whom Judge Mc'Kean delivered one of the most unjust and partial charges, which ever fell from the lips of an individual, vested with the important functions of a judge, but who must have smarted under the lashing which Cobbett gave him, as well as under the unexpected result of the whole proceeding.

Speaking of the judge's charge, Cobbett says, "It was a charming thing for me to get hold of. I had long wished to possess some such proof, some such convincing proof of the superiority of the American liberty of the press over that enjoyed in the *insular Bastille*, Great Britain; and it is to the

desire that I have of giving it a portable and durable situation, and to that alone, that this pamphlet is to be attributed,* for which kind intention, I humbly hope his Honour will feel inclined to pardon my past misdoings. His pretty words will now be read with admiration in countries, where, I am sure, had it not been for me, his name would never have once been articulated.

"When this charge, garnished with my simple and good-natured comments, comes to be served up in Britain, it will be a dish for a king. The royalists will lick their lips, and the republicans will cry, God bless us! the emigration for liberty's sake will cease, and we shall have nothing but the pure unadulterated dregs of Newgate and the Fleet, the candidates for Tyburn and Botany Bay. Blessed cargo! all patriots to the back bone; true philanthropists and universal citizens; fit for any place but England in this world and Heaven in the next."

The following is truly graphic of the character of Cobbett: "The judge began, as I believe, as usual, with a definition of the several crimes, which generally fall under the cognizance of such a court, as treason, sodomy, rape, murder, &c., but these his *Honour* touched slightly upon. He brushed them over as light and trifling offences, or rather he blew them aside, as the chaff of the criminal code, in order to come at the more solid and substantial sin of *libelling*."

"The weight or rather the measure, that his Honour gave to this crime above all others on this particular occasion, I shall prove not by ratiocination, but by arithmetic, by measurement with the aid of a carpenter's two-foot rule, as thus,

The charge contains separate definitions of thirty-two crimes; the whole of which in the columns of the gazette occupy 5 ft. 8 in. running measure, of which that of libelling alone occupies 3 ft. 1 in., 6 p. On these dimensions I state the following:

* Entitled the Republican Judge, published November 1797.

PROBLEM.

If thirty-two crimes occupy 5 ft. 8 in. and one crime occupies 3 ft. 1 in. 6 p. of how much greater magnitude ought this 1 crime to be than any one of the remaining 31?

SOLUTION, 18 times.

“Thus then, if we are to judge from the dimensions of the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania’s charge, libelling is eighteen times worse, more dangerous and more heinous than robbery, treason, forgery, sodomy, or murder.”

To those who have had the misfortune in a country like England, to hear a Wynford sum up the evidence to the jury on an action for libel, may probably carry with them some idea of the contents of the charge of Judge Mc’Kean to the grand jury of Philadelphia, in which he certainly employed his utmost abilities to influence the minds of the jurymen against the person accused. His Honour appears for the purpose to have studied the law of libel from the reign of Augustus to that auspicious moment, when some untoward freak of fortune placed him on the judicial bench in the city of Philadelphia. Of the tendency of Cobbett’s writings, he says, “Every one, who has in him the sentiments of either a christian or a gentleman, cannot but be highly offended at the envenomed scurrility that has raged in pamphlets and newspapers printed in Philadelphia for several years past, inso-much that libelling has become a kind of national crime, and distinguishes us not only from all the states around us, but from the whole civilized world; our satire has been nothing but ribaldry and Billingsgate, the contest has been, who could call names in the greatest variety of phrases, who could mangle the greatest number of characters, or who could excel in the magnitude or virulence of their lies. Hence, the honour of families has been stained, the highest posts rendered cheap and vile in the sight of the people, and the greatest services and virtue blasted. This evil, so scandalous to our government, and detestable in the eyes of all

good men, calls aloud for redress. To censure the licentiousness, is to maintain the liberty of the press."

Such was the strain by which this impartial judge attempted to bias the minds of the jury against the defendant; but all his eloquence, all the depth of colouring which he threw over the heinousness of the offence, all the vituperation in which he considered himself entitled to indulge, all failed of the desired effect, for the jury ignored the bill, there being nine for it, and ten against it; thus beating the judge and the ambassador by one only. The charge itself contained every thing that was calculated to awaken the apprehensions of the grand jury as to the effects of the accused's conduct, and to prepossess their minds against his person. In every thing but elegance and animation, it was more like the zealous and impassioned pleadings of an advocate, than the calm, dignified and impartial accents that ever should breathe in the language from the bench. So pointed, so personal a charge was never before* delivered from the bench in any country, that has the least pretensions to civil liberty. If it be foreseen that a particular case, rather novel, is to come before a grand jury, it is the custom for judges, as it certainly is their duty, to explain its nature, its tendency, and the law respecting it, fully and minutely; but never did a judge, presiding to administer justice, according to the mild and impartial precepts of the common law of England then practised in America, so far forget the genuine spirit of that law, as to point directly at a single offender, and to employ all the persuasion in his power to bring down chastisement on his head.

And what was there in the general tenor of Cobbett's publications, to warrant such an odious departure from the excellent rules, which had their origin in decency and can-

* Charges, however, of this impartial nature became afterwards very common in this country, to the great discredit of the judges who uttered them, and to the total degradation of the judicial character; witness the charge of Lord Chief Justice Best in the trial of Flint v Stockdale, and of Lord Ellenborough in the case of the King v Hone.

dour, and which have been rendered sacred by the practice of our forefathers? A stranger, had there been one in court, would naturally have concluded him to be a notorious defamer of innocence, a seditious and turbulent troubler of the government, a sworn enemy of morality and religion; in three words, a profligate, a rebel, and a blasphemer.

In his strictures on this prosecution, Cobbett takes the opportunity of entering into an exposition of his own character, some parts of which are valuable, as affording us an insight into that complicated machinery by which his actions were regulated, and which certainly in every particular bore the stamp of a strong, vigorous, and original mind, which would not be bound down by the common rules of human action, but which was determined to chalk out a line for itself, which had never been pursued by any other individual. To grapple with Cobbett, even at this early period of his literary fame, was a task which few had the hardihood to undertake, and those who did venture upon it, were certain of coming off, as Cobbett himself would call it, with a sound thrashing. Cobbett wielded his pen with all the power of the giant crushing his enemies with one blow of his irresistible bludgeon, or at least so maiming them, that they could never rise again. Fully conscious of his own robust strength, and fond of its display, he was seldom constrained by considerations of delicacy, candour, or even of strict justice, while savagely demolishing an antagonist; and for the abstraction called, and too often miscalled, "gentlemanly feeling," the delicate scrupulosity of the Normans, the Plantagenets, and *founders of a family*, it was his delight to scoff at, and to tear and trample it to atoms. Yet his times have been fertile in popular writers, who with equal coarseness, and abusiveness, and grossness more offensive, possessed not a tithe of his power, nor the dimmest reflection of a sparkle of his native exuberant wit. In the ordinary relations of life, it is but proper to say, his manners were not always distinguished by what is significantly called manly good breeding; he never could, or would not shake off that coarse and

rustic demeanor which he brought with him from the plough, and as he acted, so he wrote. To say that his writings were never tinged with malignity or bitterness, as some of his biographers would make us believe, is to belie the evidence of our own senses, for in what instance, in which he had to contend with, or to attack an enemy, did he not exhibit a rancour and a coarseness of invective, which no other writer but himself would venture to indulge in.

Cobbett shall, however, exhibit to us his character in his own words. In defending himself from the imputations which were at this time thrown upon his character by the democratic party, and which were not in the least mollified by their recent defeat in the case of the indictment for a libel, he says: "It hardly ever becomes a man to say much of his private character and concerns; but on this occasion, I trust I shall be indulged for a moment. I will say, and I will make that saying good, whoever shall oppose it, that I have never attacked any one, whose private character is not, in every light in which it can possibly be viewed, as far beneath mine, as infamy is beneath honour. Nay, I defy the city of Philadelphia, populous as it is, and respectable as are many of its inhabitants, to produce me a single man, who is more sober, industrious, or honest; who is a kinder husband, a tenderer father, a better master, a firmer friend, or though last not least, a more zealous and faithful subject.

"Most certainly it is unseemly in any one to say thus much of himself, unless compelled to it by some public outrage on his character, but when the accusation is thus made notorious, so ought the defence. And I do again and again repeat, that I fear not a comparison between my character and that of any man in the city; no, not even with that of the very judge, who held me to be the worst of miscreants. His Honour is welcome, if he please, to carry this comparison into *all* the actions of our lives, public and *domestic*; and to extend it beyond ourselves to every branch of our families.

"As to my writing, I never did slander any one, if the

promulgation of useful truths be not slander. Innocence and virtue I have often endeavoured to defend, but I have never defamed either. I have indeed stripped the close-drawn veil of hypocrisy, I have ridiculed the follies, and lashed the vices of thousands, and have done it sometimes with a rude and violent hand. But these are not the days of gentleness and mercy. Such as is the temper of the foe, such must be that of his opponent. Seeing myself published for a rogue, and my wife for a w——e, being persecuted with such infamous, such base and hellish calumny, in the philanthropic city of Philadelphia, merely for asserting the truth respecting others, was not calculated, I assure you, to sweeten my temper, or turn my ink into honey-dew.

“My attachment to order and good government, nothing but the impudence of jacobinism could deny. The object, not only of all my own publications, but also of all those which I have introduced or encouraged, from the very first moment that I appeared on the public scene, to the present day, has been to lend some aid in stemming the torrent of anarchy and confusion; to undeceive the misguided, by tearing the mask from the artful and ferocious villains, who, owing to the infatuation of the poor, and the supineness of the rich, have made such a fearful progress in the destruction of all that is amiable, and good, and sacred amongst men. To the government of this country, in particular, it has been my constant study to yield all the support in my power. When either that government, or the worthy men who administer it, have been traduced and vilified, I have stood forward in their defence, and that too, in times when even its friends were some of them locked up in silence, and others giving way to the audacious insolence of its foes. Not that I am so foolishly vain as to attribute to my illiterate pen, a thousandth part of the merit that my friends are inclined to allow it. As I wrote the other day to a gentleman, who had paid me some compliments on this score, “*I should never look at my family with a dry eye, if I did not hope to outlive my works.*”

They are mere transitory beings, to which the revolutionary storm has given life, and which with that storm will expire; but what I contend for, and what nobody can deny, I have done all that lay in my power, all I was able by any means to accomplish, in order to counteract the nefarious efforts of the enemies of the American government and nation."

We recommend the following to the serious perusal of those, who in despite of the most convincing proof to the contrary, continue to exhibit Cobbett in the character of a Deist and an Infidel. "With respect to religion," he says, "though Mr. Mc'Kean was pleased to number it amongst those things that were in danger from the licentiousness of the press, and of course from poor *me*, I think it would puzzle the very devil himself to produce from my writings, a single passage, which could by all the powers of perversion, be twisted into an attack on it. But it would, on the contrary, be extremely easy to prove that I have at all times, when an opportunity offered, repelled the attacks of its enemies, the abominable battalions of Deists and Atheists, with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength. The bitterest drop in my pen has always been bestowed upon them, because, of all the foes of the human race, I look upon them, after the devil, as being the greatest and most dreadful. Not a sacrilegious plunderer from Henry VIII. to Condorcet, and from Condorcet to the impious *sans culottes* of Virginia, has escaped my censure. All those who have attempted to degrade religion, whether by open insults and cruelties to the clergy, by blasphemous publications, or by the more dangerous poison of the malignant modern philosophy, I have ranked amongst the infamous of mankind, and have treated them accordingly."

That the enemies of Cobbett should feel sore at the defeat which they had sustained, could not but follow as a matter of course, and they consequently descended to every mean and petty annoyance which their malignity or revenge could devise. Daily was he annoyed by anonymous letters, of the style and temper of which, the following may serve as a specimen.

PORCUPINE,

You infernal ruffian, it is my full intention, when or wherever I meet you, to give you one of the greatest lambastings ever you got; my reason for doing so, you vagabond, is for writing and speaking in such a disgraceful manner as you do, against the greatest and chief heads of our city. How dare you, you corporal, or any other British subject, or slave, have the impudence to speak to a freeman: I think it is too great an honour conferred on you, to be permitted to tread on this *blessed ground*, for fear of contaminating it, as you have in a great measure done already, by your hell-fire paper, and the blackguard, scurrilous pieces which it contains.

Believe me, you infernal ruffian, it is my full intention to give you a damned whipping when I meet you.

When you publish this, take care of the streets and alleys you walk in.

Cobbett did publish it, attaching thereto the following remark:

“ This is to inform this infamous *freeman*, that I know he is a base scoundrel, and that he dares no more attack me, than he dares go to any country where there is a gallows.”

It must be confessed that the correspondence of Cobbett with his enemies, was not always carried on in the most courteous manner, in fact, there are few of those documents existing, which do not betray a vulgar scurrility, and a malignant spirit of abuse and invective, which exposed Cobbett so frequently to the animadversions of those who, in other respects, esteemed and patronised him. In no case was this more conspicuous than in the virulent, and often nauseous abuse, with which he at this time attacked Paine, whenever an opportunity presented itself; in fact, contrary to the expectations or wishes of Cobbett, the writings of that extraordinary man had obtained a circulation and an influence in America, which so greatly excited his indignation, that his pen overflowed with gall. But the effect acted in an inverse

ratio, for those who had not read the Age of Reason, became anxious to procure it, and the cheap manner in which it was published, enabled all classes to obtain a copy of it. One of the best things which Cobbett wrote at this time against Paine, was the following parody of Cato's soliloquy ; Bache is supposed to be sitting in a thoughtful posture, with Paine's works in his hands, and a halter on the table before him :—

" It must be so—Tom Paine, thou reason'st well—

Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,

This more than woman's longing after freedom ?

Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,

Of falling into jail ? Why shrinks my soul

Back on herself, and startles at a gallows,

A writ, a summons, or a god knows what ?

Why do I slyly skulk in corners dark,

And run amain from dun or constable ?

'Tis guilt, 'tis fear, that hates the sight of justice,

Dark and unfathomably deep abyss !

But liberty, thou pleasing, dreadful thought !

Through what variety of hair-breadth 'scapes,

Through what new scenes and changes must I pass !

The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me ;

But hungry guts and bloody noses rest upon it,

Here will I hold ; if there's a devil in hell,

And that there is, the French have fully proved,

Through all their works, he must delight in mischief ;

Mischief, dark and deep, pure and unalloyed ;

And that which he delights in, was and is my pleasure.

Well then—but I'm weary of conjectures ;

This must end them.

(*Laying hold of the halter.*)

Thus am I doubly armed, my death and fame,

My bane and antidote are both before me,

This rope, in the twinkling of a broomstick, ends me ;

But my type informs me I shall never die.

The wretch secured in some snug plundered house

Smiles at the halter and defies Jack Ketch ;

And I though poor, though plunder flies my grasp

Shall yet be damned to everlasting fame ;

Patriots shall sink away, and Paine himself

Grow grey and rot. The Cross Keys Tavern,

The democratic club, the sans culottes,

French gold, my cases, judgments, bonds, and debts,
All shall sink in years——

But Tom Paine's works and my infernal name
Shall remain for ever and for ever,
Unhurt, amidst the war of Carmagnoles,
The hangman's hands, the blaze of bonfires,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

(Ties the halter about his neck.)

For this exquisite production, Bache, the editor of the *Aurora*, threatened to horsewhip Cobbett, in truth, there were so many threats of that kind hanging over the head of Peter Porcupine, that if only a tithe of them had been put into execution, his back would indeed have appeared like that of the fretted Porcupine; Bache was, however, one of those pot valiant men, whose courage comes upon them by fits and starts, and it unluckily happened that one of those fits came suddenly upon him, just as he had left the Cross Keys, a noted house for the democrats, and turning one of the angles of the street, he met a biped animal, known in Philadelphia as a Porcupine, and who immediately on seeing the redoubtable proprietor of the *Aurora* advancing, raised all his quills in hostile array, prepared to dart them into the body of his advancing foe. Cobbett on a sudden stood still with his arms folded in an attitude of defiance, and Bache seeing such a formidable obstacle presenting itself to his further progress, also stood still, and no two pugilists in the ring ever eyed each other with a more scrutinizing glance, mingled with the scowl of contempt.

"Sir," said Bache, first breaking silence, "your name is William Cobbett."

"So say my g dfather and godmother," said Cobbett.

"Then I tell you, William Cobbett," said Bache, "that you William are a—are a—a very great—yes, William Cobbett you know me—my name is Bache—and you have thought proper in your villanous paper, to hold me up to public ridicule and contempt."

"Indeed!" said Cobbett, "I always pay every one their

due, but if the creature be greatly beneath my notice, I generally give him a thrashing, and then, as the dogs do, when they lift up their hind leg—I p—s upon him.”

“Sir,” said Bache, “you are a pest, you are a nuisance, you are a disgrace to the country that gave you a shelter, when you could not find one in the country that gave you birth, and which spewed you out of it, as it would a poisonous serpent.”

“You shall find,” said Cobbett, whose ire was roused at the imputation that Bache had thrown upon him, “you shall find that the serpent can sting those, who attempt to annoy him;” and without further ceremony, he laid the proprietor of the *Aurora* prostrate in the kennel, to the great delight of the bystanders, who were enjoying the squabble between the newspaper men, as they were styled.

Cobbett, however, without taking any further notice of his antagonist, proceeded on his way, but he had not been many hours at home, before he received notice of an action of damages for an outrageous assault; and strange to say, it was brought by the same attorney, who had conducted the prosecution for the libel against the king of Spain, and his most worthy envoy extraordinary. Cobbett determined to defend the action on the ground of the provocation, which he had received, but for some reason best known to himself, Bache did not proceed in his action.

It was at this period that some very bold attempts were made by some editors of the American papers, to degrade the king of England in the estimation of the American people, by representing him as a man of no moral character, and given to the infractions of those duties, which constitute the well-being of civilized society. These attacks were certain to draw down upon the offenders all the vengeance of Cobbett, in fact, it was ascertained that many passages were purposely inserted in the papers, to draw Cobbett out, with the hope of entrapping him in some expressions, that might be deemed libellous, for his ruin or his removal from America was determined on by the democratic party, and no engine was left unemployed, by which that end could be ac-

complished. One of these inflammatory paragraphs ran in the following manner, and was inserted in Lloyd's and Bradford's paper. "We learn from England, that king George has lately been hunting after deer; he assisted also with all his family to celebrate divine service at Windsor, and the day after this pious work, he got drunk with punch. *A king is an interesting animal.*"

Now this was a greater libel upon the king of England than Cobbett had ever uttered against the king of Spain, but no notice was taken of it, any further than Cobbett, in a manner unparalleled for invective, and coarse and vulgar abuse, defended the king of England in his next gazette, and publicly called upon Mc'Kean, as chief justice of the state of Pennsylvania, to prosecute Lloyd and Bradford for a libel. The affair, however, was allowed to pass over, and the king of England, to the great annoyance of Cobbett, was libelled, lampooned, and satirized in every subsequent paper, which Bradford published.*

* On this subject of the infraction of the Sabbath by George III., it may be not irrelevant in this place, to call the attention of the bishop of London, and after him of Sir Andrew Agnew, and after him of Mr. Poulter, to the manner in which our most gracious king and sovereign William IV. desecrates the Sabbath. We believe it to be the custom of good and devout people, previously to entering upon the fulfilment of the religious duties of the Sabbath, to prepare themselves for the solemn offices of the day by a becoming sanctity of behaviour, and by a total abstinence from any of those worldly pursuits, which might have a tendency to abstract the mind from a proper application to those precepts and admonitions, which the minister of Christ is to impress upon them in the house of our Lord.

It is said in the Bible, by which our sovereign lord the king, and defender of the faith, is by his coronation oath bound to regulate his conduct, that the Sabbath day shall be kept holy, and we know that Sir Andrew Agnew, and Mr. Poulter, have frequently stultified themselves in the House of Commons, by attempting to *force* the people of this country to what they call, the proper observance of the Sabbath. Now, before those two worthies again attempt to curtail the innocent and healthful amusements of the labouring classes on a Sunday, will they have the goodness to hire a cab, and drive to Windsor on a Sunday morning, and how will they there and then find the first personage of the realm employed, and setting an example to his subjects, in what manner the Sabbath can be kept holy? They will there find him regularly on a Sunday

Another subject, which at this time greatly excited the virulence of Cobbett's pen, was the projected invasion of England by France, and his opinion of the success of that measure may be gathered from the following remarks, which he inserted in his gazette, in answer to a letter which was addressed to Peter Porcupine, and which appeared in Mc' Lane and Lang's Gazette. The letter was as follows:—

Peter!

Would you believe it, last evening by chance, I was at one of our democratic porter houses, where I understood it had been agreed upon by those true Americans, that if France should be successful in the invasion of England, they intend to celebrate the victory by a grand procession, and French flags, accompanied by all the enthusiastic French songs, which characterized their folly three years ago.

I say, Peter, let these fellows have a good pricking from those far-famed quills of yours. It will be of service to them, for they are becoming too sanguine in their expectations of the invasion.

Believe me your friend,

A LATE FRENCH AMERICAN.

morning, about an hour before he enters the church of God, employed in the truly sabbatical occupation of inspecting a battalion of his household troops, which have been drawn up expressly for his amusement, in the quadrangle of the castle. Now can the inspection of a regiment of soldiers be considered as an act that ought to be committed on a Sunday, when there are six other days in the week, that such a useless farce could be performed? Why does not the bishop of London, whose pious soul sickens at the idea of a baker selling a loaf of bread on a Sunday, as a scandalous desecration of the holy day, why does he not direct his attention to the royal, noble, and dignified infringers of the Sabbath? why is he on a sudden so conveniently blind to the sins of the great, whilst on the humble and the poor, he, most holy and right reverend father in God, fulminates his wrath! if they dare break the Sabbath, not by an inspection of a crowd of human machines, but by the inspection of the interior of a beef steak pie, that has been brought from the bakers on a Sunday. Kings should be the first persons to observe the laws of their country, if they infringe them, they have no right to impute blame, nor to punish their subjects if they do the like.

The following is Cobbett's reply, and it is truly worthy of him.

"I am happy to see a late French American write in this style, and would not lose a moment in complying with his request, if I knew the *sans culottes* by name. Before I can shoot my quills, I must get a good sight of the object. Give me the rascals' callings, trades, connexions, characters, and above all their names; with these facts to go upon, though I will not promise to make them more detestable than they really are, I will promise to make them more notorious. I will engage that they shall be cursed in countries they never heard of.

"I know that New York is not singular in having a band of ruffians, who propose to themselves much exultation from the result of the planned invasion of Great Britain. The hope at once shows the malignity and ignorance of the scoundrels. For my part, I scorn the idea of the safety of England lying in her fleet. Certainly, I believe her fleet alone is quite sufficient to protect her against the world united, but I should blush for my country, if I could for a moment fear that the landing of an enemy would prove her ruin. Nothing is so absurd as such a thought. A hundred thousand Britons would drive double the number of *sans culottes* into the sea. If the Channel did not separate the two nations, if Britain lay along the frontier of France, then Britons would not be the men they now are. They would gabber a half kind of French; they would imitate their neighbours; they would mix with them, and be corrupted by them: consequently, they would then fall under their intrigues, as the Brabanters, the Savoyards, the Spaniards, and others have done; but such as they now happily are, if the island of Britain could be shoved across the Channel close up to France, I am confident that all the myriads they could pour into it, even under the command of the gallant general Guillotine, would never conquer even a single parish."

Although Cobbett was well aware that his enemies were putting every instrument in motion to effect his ruin, yet he

was certainly not privy to the extent to which they carried their machinations. Some insight was, however, gained into it by the following paragraph, which appeared in Webster's paper, published in March 1799:—

"It was reported at Philadelphia, on the Sunday, that the editor of Porcupine's Gazette, had been ordered by government to leave the United States."

This Cobbett treated as a weak invention of the enemy, and he argues upon it accordingly, for he says, "It is notorious that the same report has circulated in all directions, and that it was generally believed in this city (Philadelphia,) on Saturday and Sunday last; its becoming an article of news with Webster, is not therefore at all astonishing, or worthy of notice; but it is proper to observe, that where such a report could possibly gain belief, there must be an inherent baseness in a vast proportion of the people. They all knew well that I had done nothing to render myself a suspected person. They knew that what little property I had was *here*; they knew that I could not be in the interest of the enemy. Even, supposing me to have libelled the president, they knew that this could not warrant his ordering me out of the country. The alien bill authorizes him to order away *suspected* foreigners, but it gives him no authority to exercise this power as a *punishment for crimes against the law*, much less does it authorize him to employ a law intended for the preservation of the state, as the means of gratifying his own private revenge.

"I do not say this from the supposition that the president has felt an inclination to order me away. I know he never has felt, and I know he never will feel any such inclination, but I state these circumstances, in order to show, in its true light, the degradation of mind that must prevail, when such a report could gain belief. The alien law was made to empower the president to remove foreigners suspected of being in the interest of the enemy. This is the very ground on which the report of the committee has defended it, the people therefore, who could believe that the president had ordered me to re-

move in virtue of this law, who could lend a patient ear to the story and tamely acquiesce in the measure, must have lost every idea of justice and freedom, must be sunk to the lowest degree of servility, and must be ready to tender their hands and their feet to the first enterprising tyrant that will condescend to load them with his chains.

"I have hitherto proceeded upon the supposition that I had really *abused* the president, as Mr. Simpleton called it, and published a libel against him. That it should be the general belief, that the president had ordered me to remove, that he had forced me to embark with a wife and children at this season of the year (March, 1799,) and to abandon every farthing's worth of my property; this belief, even on the supposition that I had abused and libelled the president, would be a most damning proof of prevalent baseness. What then shall we call it? how shall we call it? how shall we find words to express our contempt of the wretches, who entertained it, when we consider, that they knew I never had published a word with regard to the president, that could possibly be construed even into disrespect?

"Let it not be imagined that any thing I have here said is intended as an indirect appeal to the lenity of the president, *I repeat that I know he never thought of ordering me away. I have ever had the fullest reliance in his justice*; but had it so happened that he had been as unjust as the whispering shrugging slaves have supposed him, and he sent me his mandate to depart, I should have received it with a smile; blessed be God! I have a HOME."

Cobbett must have felt himself somewhat on one of the horns of a dilemma, when after eulogising the *justice* of the president, when after abusing all those who could lend a patient ear to such a story, he afterwards discovered that the rumour was not without foundation, and that it really had been the intention of the president to remove him from the United States, and in which he was prevented only by the advice and remonstrance of the attorney-general. The confirmation of this fact coming to the knowledge of Cobbett, demanded

from him a most cautious line of conduct respecting the little property which he had amassed in Philadelphia; for as it was evident, that the design of his removal had been mooted in the councils of the president, he knew not how soon the thunderbolt might fall upon him, and he therefore began secretly to realise what property he could, and the prudence of this step will in a short time declare itself.

In the mean time, threat upon threat poured in against him of prosecutions for libels, to all of which he turned a deaf ear, but in one instance it gave occasion for his relating the following anecdote of himself, which shows, that he must have been early initiated in the trade of libelling, although the charges against him might not have been well founded.

"When I had the honour," he says, "to serve his majesty, I was with seven of my comrades quartered upon a most bitter vixen of a landlady. One evening, when we had invested her fire-side pretty closely, she began to abuse us in a way, that put me in mind of Fielding's Mrs. Tow-ouse, to whom she bore no weak resemblance. As it happened, I had an old torn copy of Joseph Andrews, which I fetched down stairs, I began with a loud voice to read the description of the termagant in the romance, but before I had half done, the landlady flew across the half moon that we had formed round her fire, and fixing one claw in my hair, and the other in the book, began to pull and tear like a fury, swearing all the while that she would have me flogged for a *libel*. With some difficulty I disentangled myself from her clutches, and endeavoured to smoothen her down, by convincing her that it was a printed book I was reading; a book too, that was made, probably before she was born, and of course that it could not be *her* that I was reading about. "You lie, you young dog," says she, "it was *about* me, it was *about* me, and about nobody else." And she actually went and complained of me to the commanding officer, telling him, that I sat in her presence reading a nasty lying book, that abused her, and all the *genteel* women in the parish. The colonel sent for me, and having obtained an explanation of the busi-

people can in reality exercise no power, which will not tend to their own injury, and therefore, if they are honest men, as well as men of sense, they scorn to foster their vanity at the expense of their peace and happiness. Hence it is, that in states, where the popular voice is unchecked by a royal or any other hereditary control, that voice is, nine times out of ten, given in favour of those fawning parasites, who in order to gratify their own interest and ambition, profess to acknowledge no sovereignty, but that of the people, and who, when they once get into power, rule the poor sovereign that has chosen them, with a rod of scorpions, affecting, while the miserable wretch is writhing under their stripes, to call themselves 'his representatives.'

"Of all the tyrannies that the devil or man ever invented, *the tyranny of an elective assembly uncontrolled by regal power* is the most insupportable. When the individual is a tyrant, the slaves have *the satisfaction* of knowing their oppressor, and we may add, when the individual is a superannuated fool, the people have *the satisfaction* to know that they are under the control of regal power. In the former case, they have the *consolation* to hear him execrated, and amidst their miseries, they are now and then cheered with the hope, that some valiant hand, some Charlotte Cordé will appear, with a dagger to the heart of the miscreant. But an *uncontrolled elective assembly* is an undefined, an invisible, and an invulnerable monster; it insinuates like the plague, or strikes like the apoplexy; it is as capricious as cruel, and as ravenous as death: like death too, it loses half its terrors by the frequent repetition of its ravages, and such is its delusive influence, that every man, though he daily sees his neighbours falling a sacrifice to the scourge, vainly imagines it to be at a distance from himself."

We may be allowed to enter our protest against some part of this reasoning of Cobbett, and had he lived but a few months longer, little doubt can exist, but that he would have altered his mind, as to the benefit or utility which the country derives from an hereditary irresponsible branch of the legis-

lature, which is at open war with the *demands* and wishes of the people. Our whole constitution is a mere bubble, as far as respects any restraint upon legislative encroachment. Even the executive branch of the legislature has its name and place in the constitution of the country, but to say that, although it be vested with the power of stopping the encroachment of legislative enactment, that any such power is ever put into force, is tantamount to the dissolution of the ministry which then guides the helm of the state. The intent and meaning of all constitutions, is, to define the powers granted, and prevent any department from exceeding those powers or exercising others, not granted; but if the people assign to that department which *makes* laws, the right of judging whether they be conformable to the limitation of the constitutional instrument, is it not evident that there is no barrier provided against infractions, whenever the law makers choose to enact a law contrary to the letter and spirit of the great charter of the land? for in the very act of passing it, they adjudge upon its validity. It is true, that the legislative and executive are by the constitution of England placed in separate departments, and that a coalition of them in the same hands, might in some instances lead to confusion, oppression, and subversion of all civil liberty; but one of the most threatening effects of the connection of the legislative and executive, is its apparent tendency to corrupt the legislature. Corruption consists in whatever produces a voluntary deviation from duty. Whatever bribes the minds of individuals, whether acting in a private or public character, from the paths of upright and disinterested conduct, is corruption. It makes no essential difference in the *motive*, and none at all in the consequence of the action, whether a member of the legislature be wrought upon to assent to an improper law or appointment, for a sum of money, or to secure to himself thereby some post or advantage for himself and others.

It is impracticable here to enter into a detail of facts, to prove that the virtue of the legislature has been, and will be, constantly assailed and overcome by committing it to the

nomination and appointment of the executive officers. It shows itself in the very formation of the legislature. No sooner does an election for a parliament approach, than the question is not, who are the wisest, and most disinterested, and of most integrity, but who will best answer the views of *party*, of private ambition, or personal resentment. In every county, there is constantly a succession of people aspiring to appointment, civil and military, some look for promotion in the army, navy, or the courts of law; some have an eye to the commissionerships of the customs and excise, some look to the snug sinecures of the government offices, and some perhaps have resentments against existing officers, and would fain oust them from their seats, or even when seated, many are of that pliant disposition, that they take upon themselves the burdensome office of steward of the Chiltern Hundreds, in order to make way for one, who is more devoted to *the party*, and whose influence in the house carries a greater weight. Colonel Fox very politely and patriotically resigned his seat in parliament, to enable Lord John Russell to get into it; but was the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds the only office he obtained for such disinterested conduct? was there no place in Canada, in which the retiring Fox could shelter himself? all these things show that the nominations to parliament, are directed and supported upon principles altogether beside those, which should form the basis for a right election of legislative characters; the result must, of course, be unfavourable to the public good. But this is not all, not only are elections rendered vicious, and the morals of the people corrupted in these struggles for personal advantages, but unhappily the candidates partake of the contamination; but they promise allegiance to their party, and if those kinds of illicit promotions and appointments be not publicly or directly entered into, they are sufficiently understood and guaranteed by the friends of the candidate, who take a leading part in the election.

The extension of the elective franchise was no part of the early politics of Cobbett, for on that subject he says, "The

ambitious knaves, who flatter you with high notions of your rights and privileges, who are everlastingly driving in your ears the blessings of what they call 'the elective franchise,' wish to add to the number of elections, because they well know that they would thereby gain an accession of strength. The only object such men have in view, is the gratification of their own ambition at the public expense; and to accomplish this object, they stand in need of your assistance. There is a continual struggle between them and the legitimate sovereignty of the country, which restrains them from pillaging, oppressing, and insulting the people. Hence it is, that they are continually endeavouring to persuade the people that that sovereignty requires to be checked and controlled, in which nefarious endeavours they are unfortunately but too often successful. The Americans are as fond of freedom as the English, and they want no information that you possess; but having been too jealous of the royal authority; having lent their ears, and next their hands to those demagogues, who persuaded them that they were capable of governing themselves, they destroyed the only safeguard of that liberty for which they thought they were fighting, and the want of which they now so sensibly and feelingly deplore.

"Stick to the crown, though you find it hanging on a bush, was the precept which a good old Englishman gave to his sons, at a time when the monarchy was threatened with that subversion, which it afterwards experienced, and which was attended with the perpetration of a deed, that has fixed an indelible stain upon the annals of England. Blessed be God," says Cobbett, "we are threatened with no such danger at present, but a repetition of the precept can never be out of season, as long as there are whigs in existence, and as long as there are men foolish enough to listen to their insidious harangues. The crown is the guardian of the nation, but more especially is its guardianship necessary to those, who are destitute of rank and wealth. The king gives the weakest and poorest of us some degree of consequence:" and we opine that there are a multitude amongst us, who would

have acknowledged their obligations to Mr. Cobbett, if he would have shown in what manner that consequence manifests itself. "Further," says Cobbett, "as his subjects, we are upon a level with the noble and the rich; in yielding him obedience, veneration, and love, (all of which he ought to merit from those same subjects, before they are called upon to yield them to him,) neither obscurity, nor penury can repress our desires, nor lessen the pleasure that we feel in return; (a benefit and advantage arising from royalty, of which we were not previously aware,) he is the fountain of national honour, which, like the sun, is no respecter of persons, but smiles with equal warmth on the palace and the cottage." Nor should Mr. Cobbett have omitted, that he is also the fountain of *personal* honour, as the country can testify, in the Munsters and the Fitzclarences, for the support of whom the people of this country are obliged to labour, and which naturally renders them deeply in love with the said fountain of honour. Cobbett, however, concludes his bombastic eulogy of royalty, by informing us, that "*in the justice of the king*, (he omits to mention any particular king,) *in his magnanimity, his piety*, in the *wisdom of his councils*, in the *splendour of his throne*, in the *glory of his arms*, in all *his virtues*, and in all *his honours*, we share, not according to rank or to riches, but in proportion to the love that we bear to the land which gave us birth, and which contains the ashes of our fathers." History must decide whether any or which of the above high-sounding virtues can be ascribed to George III., as the king then living, when Cobbett penned his fulsome eulogium; and we doubt not, had he written it in the reign of William IV., no one would be disposed to dispute the question, that the latter is fully as well entitled to all the virtues specified by Cobbett, as the war-loving lunatic, George III.

The plot for the expulsion of Cobbett from America was now almost mature, and at the head of the conspiracy, for by no other term can it be stigmatized, stood Mc'Kean, the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. To crush the publication of

Porcupine's Gazette, appeared to be the whole bent of his endeavours, but not being able to fix upon any thing that could be fairly called a libel, he fell upon a scheme by which he hoped to effect his purpose without their assistance.

He collected a bundle of Cobbett's pamphlets and papers, and thereupon issued his warrant to bring the author before him. This warrant, (of which, however, Cobbett was refused a copy,) stated that he had published certain false and malicious libels against himself, against Mifflin, Dallas, Jefferson, Munroe, Gallatin, old Franklin, the duke of Bedford, Charles Fox, Sheridan, Lord Stanhope, Buonaparte, the bishop of Bergamo, Pichegru, Robespierre, Talleyrand, Parker, (the mutineer,) Napper Tandy, Arthur O'Connor, and "the devil knows who besides."

And what did this partial and inexorable judge demand of Cobbett? not bail for his appearance, as the law required, to answer for his offences at the next court of Oyer and Terminer; no, he had no idea of committing his ridiculous charges to a grand jury, which is always composed of some men of respectability; he therefore demanded surety of himself and two others, in the sum of four thousand dollars, for his keeping the peace, and being of good behaviour. Having taken these recognizances, he immediately set himself to work to collect the *subsequent* publications of Cobbett, to pick out of them what he was pleased to call, breaches of recognizances, and thereupon he issued a civil process for the recovery of the four thousand dollars, in the name and for the behoof of the *free State of Pennsylvania*.

To those who understand the law, the atrocity of this procedure must be too evident to need any comment, and every man of common sense must perceive, that in a state where the usual course of law can be thus eluded, where grand juries, the principal check on a partial court, can be dispensed with at pleasure, where a man must give security or go to jail, for publishing what his accusers never intended to bring before a jury, where the same bail can be demanded of him every week, and where he can be kept *constantly* and for

years together, bound to keep the peace and good behaviour, at the arbitrary will of a judge, without ever having broken the peace, or behaved ill, and without ever being brought to trial; where all this can be done, every one, who has two grains of sense, must perceive that there can be no liberty of the press, nor any other liberty whatever, and yet it was the fashion in America to exclaim, "Here the press is perfectly free."

"Yes," says Cobbett, "such freedom of the press would not, however, satisfy John Bull. Honest John is sometimes wrong-headed and fickle; he sometimes wrangles with his best friends, while he hugs the villains who are ready and willing to cut his throat; but John never loses sight of the main chance, and although a noisy patriot may wheedle him out of a good deal, you would find it very difficult to hoax him into contentment with your Pennsylvanian liberty of the press. John's liberty, like his money, must be sterling, or he hurls it in your teeth."

The mine which the enemies of Cobbett had been for a long time preparing, and which was to blow him over to England, or to any country which he might choose, was now exploded, in an action for a libel, which was brought against him by Dr. Rush, who had pretended to cure the good people of Philadelphia of the yellow fever. This Dr. Rush, who forms so prominent a character in the life of Cobbett, and who was the cause of his removal from America, was of English extraction, and by calling, a blacksmith. As the following account of the birth and character of Rush forms a part of the libel, as charged against Cobbett, we shall abridge his own description, as it appeared in the first number of the "Rushlight;" and Cobbett prefaces the account by a quotation from the 9th chapter 11th verse of Job, Can the **RUSH** grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?

"Of the mother of Rush," Cobbett says, "I have heard nothing, except that she kept a huckster's shop, or stall, and was a very kind and pious Presbyterian, who recollecting, I suppose, the apostle's remark respecting the salubrity of wine

to the stomach, occasionally administered to the comfort of her fellow creatures by retailing drams. The reader will gladly excuse me from going any further back in the pedigree, but I cannot dismiss the subject without observing that Dr. Rush was not *quite just* to his family, when he was ready to say, and almost without a figure, 'To corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.' The parentage of Rush was not extremely well calculated for sending him into the world with that independence of mind, which, among persons of low birth, is certainly the best foundation, whereon to raise a character conspicuous for sincerity, candour and integrity, magnanimity and virtue.

"Rush was remarkable for insinuating manners, and for that smoothness and softness of tongue, which the mock quality call *politeness*, but which the profane vulgar call *flattery*. To see and hear him, you would think he was all friendship and humanity. He shakes hands with all he meets; every one is his *dear friend*, all the people his *dear fellow citizens*, and all the creation his *dear fellow creatures*. The lamp of his philanthropy is constantly burning, and it burns with equal brightness, whether whites, yellows, or blacks are the objects of his affection. He certainly is not the first moralist who has observed, that bluntness is no recommendation with the rich, but he is the first physician that ever thought of making a propensity to be praised in the patient, conducive to the aid of his medicines. One of his pupils told me, that his preceptor prided himself much upon this discovery, 'Give your patients,' he used to say, 'a *good strong dose of flattery*, to compose their minds, for without that, you may as well hope to succeed, as Miss Willing may hope to get to heaven by listening from her window to the organ of St. Paul's church.'

"If making fair weather with men of all religions, and all parties, be a proof of merit, I know of no person so meritorious as Rush. He has alternately appeared to be a Presbyterian, a Quaker, an Episcopalian, and a Methodist. He is intimate with all the clergy, from Bishop White down to

the black bishop. I have often admired the ingenuity with which, in his account of the yellow fever of 1793, he pays his court at one and the same time, to people of all sects, ranks, and colours. There is one sentence in particular of this work, which ought to be immortalized. He is speaking about the opinion that prevailed, respecting the danger of congregations meeting on *Sundays*, and knowing the Quakers to have a whimsical objection to the name by which Christians in general call that day of the week, he makes a fair compromise betwixt them and the other sects, and in the very same sentence calls it *Sunday* and *first day*.

He distributes his liquors all palates to please,
To some gives the wine, and to others the lees ;
And lest that his customers quarrel and box,
Gives the wine to the POPE, and the lees to GEORGE FOX."

Cobbett had about this time written a lampoon upon Rush, entitled "The Immaculate Father," which is represented to have had a terrible effect upon all the members of his family. "*It threw Mrs. Rush into hysterics, made a deep wound in her heart, and tore with remorseless rage all the fine fibres and delicate sympathies of conjugal love.*" It appears, however, that Cobbett denies ever having mentioned Mrs. Rush in his life, or that he scarcely knew that there was such a being in the world, except by implication, for as he knew that Dr. Rush had a large family, it followed as a matter of course that they must have had a mother. "In regard to the daughters, whose generous sensibility was so great, the vile publication gave all of them the character of Niobes, for their tears flowed incessantly, and as to the sons, their breasts were agitated and inflamed by manlier passions. They burned, they burst with indignation; rage and revenge drove them headlong to desperate deeds, accumulating woe on woe. With great difficulty, the prudential advice, the parental commands of the father could restrain their fury; with difficulty they were prevented from taking immediate vengeance on their cruel oppressor, and the scandalous libeller of their

father. 'Be patient, my children,' said he, 'I am deeply injured; but the laws of my country offer me justice, and point out the road to redress. It is tardy, but it is certain and ample. Delay may be painful to you, but the duties of a good citizen require it.' "

About this time an article appeared in Mr. Fenno's paper, signed, "A Member of the College of Physicians;" giving an account of Rush's conduct during the yellow fever of 1793. It was actually written by Dr. Currie, but attributed by the Rushites to a Dr. Ross, a Scotch physician of great learning, and considerable eminence in his profession. It was the opinion of the sons of Dr. Rush, that there were already too many physicians in Philadelphia, in which opinion every one coincided, who followed the prescriptions of Dr. Rush. However, one of the sons of Dr. Rush thought proper to give the Philadelphians a chance of being minus one physician, by sending a challenge to Dr. Ross, which he very properly declined accepting, on which, in conjunction with a Dr. Bullus, he waylaid Dr. Ross, and beat him unmercifully with a bludgeon. On the following day, Cobbett published a short account of the matter, but owing to the hasty manner in which he received his information, the account was not perfectly correct, but it did not deviate from the truth in any essential point. The valiant son of Dr. Rush, however, took offence at the account, which Cobbett had given, and published an address on the subject to Cobbett himself, concluding with the following words: "I must stigmatize you as a liar, and a perverting rascal. You call yourself an Englishman; Englishmen are brave, but you are a coward." Unwilling to be thought inferior to the nice feeling youth in politeness, and still more unwilling to be thought afraid of his bludgeon, Cobbett repaid him in his own coin, and with interest, by publishing his address, and subjoining to it the following remark:—"N. B. I affirm this John Rush to be an *impertinent puppy*, a way-laying *coward*, a *liar*, and a *rascal*." These epithets were certainly more gross and offensive than the simple one of impertinent puppy, which Dr.

Ross had used, and for the application of which, he was so severely punished; nevertheless, Cobbett, as far as his person was concerned, escaped wholly harmless, but the whole proceeding strongly impressed the conviction on his mind, that he was marked out as a victim by a particular party, and that the first opportunity would be seized upon, by which his ruin could be accomplished, and his ultimate removal from Philadelphia be effected.

We shall now proceed to detail those circumstances, which led to the abrupt departure of Cobbett from Philadelphia, and ultimately to his return to his native country. Dr. Rush, to whom the democrats were indebted for the removal of Cobbett from Philadelphia, was an ambitious and a vain man, and as is common with persons possessed of vanity to a great extent, to suffer them to remain quiet in obscurity, and of talents too contemptible, or temper too fickle to enable them to attain superiority by the ordinary course of advancement; he had ever been upon the search for some discovery, some captivating novelty, to which he might prefix his name, and thus reach at a single leap the goal, at which men seldom arrive, but by slow, cautious, and painful approaches. To a determination to become a great man, in defiance of niggardly nature, might be fairly attributed all the solemn fooleries of this versatile doctor, who in his impatient pursuit after fame, had chopped and changed from science to science, till at last, like the straggling hound, he had the mortification to see himself outstripped in the chace by the slow-motioned companions, whom he formerly despised.

Various were the tricks that he tried; religion, morals, jurisprudence, literature, economy, politics, and philosophy, all became, at times, the subjects of his plans and projects. Still, however, fame fled from his grasp. His *Original Essays*, though aided by puffs in abundance, excited a laugh, and that was all. The learned languages were still taught in the schools; little girls still played with dolls; and parents still kept sharp knives and pointed scissors from the hands of their children; men still used tobacco, and women continued

to sweeten their tea with West India sugar. Thus baffled, thus first despised, and then forgotten as an author, the doctor saw no hope of rendering himself distinguished but as a physician. On this, therefore, he appeared to have resolved much about the time that the yellow fever of 1793 offered an opportunity favourable to the enterprise.

He did not, however, according to his own account of the matter, go incautiously to work, but took all those preliminary steps, which serve to give the air of plausibility to an unjustifiable proceeding. He first consulted, as usual, with the College of Physicians; he learnt the particulars, and tried or pretended to try the effects of the practice of every individual physician of note; then and not before, he broached his *grand discovery*. "The manner," says Cobbett, "in which this discovery was made, with the pranks that he played before and after it, if we could forget the melancholy circumstances that accompanied them, would furnish an admirable subject for the pencil of a Moliere." The following passage forms a part of the libel charged against Cobbett:—

"At the first breaking out of the yellow fever, he made use of *gentle purges*; these he laid aside, and had recourse to a *gentle vomit of ipecacuanha*, next he *gave bark in all its usual forms, of infusion, powder, and tincture, and joined wine, brandy and aromatics with it*; this was followed by the application of *blisters to the limbs, neck, and head*; these *tortments* were succeeded by an attempt to *rouse the system by wrapping the whole body in blankets dipped in warm vinegar*; he next *rubbed the right side with mercurial ointment, with the view of exciting the action of the vessels through the medium of the liver*; after this, he again returned to bark, which he gave in large quantities, and in one case, *ordered it to be injected into the bowels once in four hours*, and at last, having found that *wrapping his patients in blankets dipped in warm water*, did no good, he directed *buckets full of water to be thrown frequently upon them*.

"Surprising as it may seem, his patients *died*. Thus baffled in every attempt to stop the ravages of the fever, he antici-

pated all the numerous and complicated distresses attendant on pestilential diseases. He, however, very modestly presumed, that he was the instrument chosen by Providence for discovering the remedy for so pestilential a disease, and therefore, he says, 'before I desisted, I recollected that I had, *amongst some old papers*, a manuscript account of the yellow fever, as it prevailed in Virginia in the year 1741, which had been put into my hands by Doctor Franklin, a short time before his death.'

"The yellow fever of 1793, broke out on the first of August, and *the instrument of Providence* immediately began to put in practice the regime presented in the account given by Franklin, called the *chologogue purge*, which was composed of ten grains of calomel and fifteen of jalap. To this purge, which the inventor, Dr. Rush, called the *Sampson* of medicine, was added copious blood letting, a most powerful co-operator.

"With these remedies, the Pennsylvanian Hippocrates, as the partisans of Dr. Rush styled him, set to work in the month of September. The mercurial purges became popular, and the discoverer so elated that he thought it no longer necessary to suppress the suggestions of his vanity, accordingly on the 12th September, he actually came out in the newspapers with an exulting recommendation of the use of his *specifics*, as the only means of saving the lives of the sick.

"Various were the publications that he now sent through the papers in the form of paragraphs, cards, letters, &c., in one of which he asserted, that in consequence of his discovery, there was no occasion for fleeing to the country, for that the yellow fever was no longer a dangerous disease, but was *now* perfectly under the power of medicine. As may be naturally supposed, the most eminent of the physicians of Philadelphia, saw themselves insulted and injured in their practice, by the vain boastings and assertions of Dr. Rush; and Dr. Currie, one of the most celebrated physicians of Philadelphia, publicly declared that the mode of treatment

advised by Dr. Rush, could not in the yellow fever fail of being *certain death*."

In the contest of 1793, Cobbett says, that "Rush was fairly defeated, notwithstanding he wrote more in the several newspapers, than all the other physicians put together, and although he plied 'his dear Philadelphians,' 'his dear fellow citizens with more than *quantum sufficit* of that oily lingo, for which he had been so long renowned, still 'his dear fellow citizens' loved coaxing well enough, but they loved life better. Still resolved, however, not to acknowledge himself in an error, but to support his practice, if possible, he stopped until the fever was over, and then like Dr. Sangrado, the famous physician of Valladolid, he wrote a book, which, however, produced an effect precisely the contrary of the one intended. Men could not be persuaded, even by the smooth tongue of Dr. Rush, that bleeding almost to death was likely to save life.

"When, therefore, the yellow fever again broke out in 1797, Rush commenced writing in the newspapers, but with somewhat less confidence and more caution than formerly. He did not address himself directly to his 'dear fellow citizens,' but published letters sent to him by his brethren of the lancet practice, giving account of the great cures wrought by bleeding and mercurial purges. Such tricks, however, did not pass unperceived; many gentlemen of Philadelphia expressed to Cobbett their dread of the practice, and their indignation at the arts that were made use of to render it prevalent. They thought, and not without reason, that it was lawful, just, and fair, to employ a newspaper in decrying what other newspapers had been employed to extol. In fact, Cobbett wanted very little persuasion to induce him to endeavour to prevent a revival of that, which he had always looked upon as the scourge of the city in 1793, and which he was now fully persuaded menaced the lives of his friends, his neighbours, his workmen, his customers, and in short, of the people in general amongst whom he dwelt. Everything seemed to threaten a return of the former consternation and

calamity. Purge and bleed! purge and bleed! resounded through the half deserted city, while the responsive howlings of the dogs 'gave dreadful note of preparation.'

"Frigid indeed must have been my feelings," says Cobbett, "as cowardly must have been my heart, if with a public print, such as I held in my hand, I had in a scene like this, remained a silent spectator. Far was it from me to think of a course so dishonourable. I thought I saw approaching all the horrors of 1793, and both my interest and my duty commanded me to endeavour to avert them."

In regard to the conduct pursued by Cobbett on this occasion, the most extraordinary constructions were put upon it, according to the strength of the ingenuity of the individual who devised them; and perhaps one of the most singular of all, was that, which by some means crept into the brain of one Moses Levi, one of Rush's lawyers, who being full of human charity, compatible with the character of a Jew, suggested that Cobbett being a royalist, might possibly have hoped, by discrediting Rush's practice, to increase the mortality amongst the *republicans*. "Such a diabolical thought," says Cobbett, "never could have been engendered but in the mind of a Jew. But honest Mosey seemed to have forgotten, that I could not possibly want to kill *myself*. I cannot for my life, however, muster up any thing like anger against a poor devil like Moses; he did not believe a word that he said; he vash vorking for de monish, dat vash all."

At the onset of this ruinous affair to Cobbett, the wild opinions of Rush and his followers, appeared to him to be too preposterous, too glaringly absurd, to merit serious animadversion, while, therefore, he admitted the sober refutations of those medical gentlemen, who thought Rush worth their notice, he confined himself to squibs, puns, epigrams, and quotations from Gil Blas. In this *petite guerre*, he had an excellent auxiliary in Mr. Fenno, jun., or rather Fenno was the principal, and Cobbett the auxiliary. Never was a paper war carried on with greater activity and perseverance, or crowned with more complete success. It began about the

middle of September, and before October was nearly ended, "bleeding almost to death," and Rush's powders were the standing jests of the town. Rush suppressed his mortification for a time; he seemed to say that it was beneath a great physician, and a member of the learned Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, to be ruffled at what a couple of low newsmongers could say, but at last, having felt him nearly all over, they hit upon his soft place, and there they did so sting and goad him, that he finally became half frantic, and ran about the streets, vowing vengeance. His fury, however, soon gave way to the meek and christian propensity, which he was said to inherit from a pious matron, who once sold apples and drams at the corner of Second Street, Philadelphia, and so, like Nicodemus Broadbrim, in Foote's Devil upon two-sticks, "he sent for a sinful man in the flesh, called an attorney, to prepare a parchment, and carry them unto judgment."

The narrative of the juridical proceedings in the cause of Rush, furnishes a series of facts, of which justice to the people of America, justice to foreign nations, and particularly, as Cobbett terms them, to the deceived and infatuated in his native country, demand an ample exposure. This subject is of some importance to every man who has the slightest notion of *real* liberty, or the least desire to secure its enjoyment. *Political* liberty is a matter of speculation, rather than of interest; it is an imaginary something, of meaning undefined, and is at best, a very distant, if not a very questionable good. But *civil* liberty, which is better perhaps expressed by the single word *justice*, is clearly defined and understood, and is ardently beloved by us all. It brings us into contact with the government, the excellence of which it makes us feel; it comes to our homes, and our firesides; it throws a rampart round our property, and a shield before our persons; it is our guide and our help through the day, and our guardian when we lie down to sleep. This is the liberty, of which our forefathers were so proud, this is the liberty, which their blood so often flowed to preserve to their children.

The action which was brought by Rush against Cobbett, was brought in the Supreme Court of the State of Pennsylvania, and his first object was to remove the suit from that court to the circuit of the United States, a removal to which, his being an alien, gave him a right to demand, but which was by the judges of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania absolutely refused.

That Cobbett possessed a right by the laws of the constitution of the United States, to the removal of his cause, cannot admit of a doubt, and the refusal to grant it shows the partial and unjust manner in which the laws were administered in the State of Pennsylvania. The petition of Mr. Cobbett for the removal of his cause, was founded on the following law, which was enacted by the Congress of the United States, for the better security of the property of aliens.

“ And be it further enacted, that if a suit be commenced in any state court against an alien, and the matter in dispute exceeds the sum of five hundred dollars, exclusive of costs, to be made appear to the satisfaction of the court, and the defendant shall, at the time of entering his appearance in the said state court, file a petition for the removal of the cause for trial, into the next circuit court of the United States, to be held in the district where the suit is pending, and shall offer good and sufficient security for his entering in such court, on the first day of its session, copies of said proceedings against him, and also for his there appearing and entering special bail in the cause, if special bail was originally requisite therein, it shall then be the *duty* of the state court to accept the surety, and *proceed no further in the case.*”

Whoever knows any thing of America, whoever is in the least acquainted with the national partialities and antipathies, which mark the words and the conduct of but too many of the rulers of the individual states, must at once perceive that such provision is absolutely necessary. In Pennsylvania, for instance, it was notorious that all the influential officers of the government, executive and judiciary,

bore an implacable hatred against Great Britain, and all her loyal subjects ; and though a jury stood between these rulers and the British subject, yet it was equally notorious, that that jury must be chosen by a man, who held his lucrative office during the pleasure of the governor.

In such a state of things, what justice had a Briton, and more than all, an obnoxious Briton like William Cobbett, to expect in the courts of Pennsylvania ? Besides, there was an absolute absurdity in his being compelled to plead in those courts, for who ought to administer justice to an alien, but that government, who makes treaties, and who maintains all the national intercourse with the sovereign of that alien ? But if British subjects alone were insecure in the courts of Pennsylvania, how much more insecure was Mr. Cobbett, against whom, it was well known, that not only the governor, but even the chief justice, who was to preside at the trial, had a personal and mortal grudge ? He, therefore, at once determined on removing the cause, notwithstanding the repeated remonstrances of his lawyers, who made use of every argument that could be thought of, to persuade him to abandon his intention. They were fully of opinion, that there was no danger in the supreme court of Pennsylvania, and that declaring himself in open court a subject of the king of Great Britain, would be tantamount to a declaration, that monarchy was preferable to republicanism, and would of course not only be very offensive to the court before whom such a declaration was made, but would inevitably tend to render him, if possible, even more odious in the eyes of the people of America, and to weaken the force of all his future publications.

Mr. Cobbett's lawyers were Mr. Thomas and Mr. Edward Tilghman. When this advice was given him, he had every reason to suspect the former of the basest treachery, but in the fidelity of the latter, he had the most implicit confidence. The reasons, however, on which the advice was grounded, were far from being satisfactory to him ; declaring himself the

subject of his sovereign, was nothing more than the formal assertion of a truth that, in his opinion, did him great honour, it was saying nothing for or against either monarchy or republicanism, and as to its giving offence to the court, or to the people of America, the idea appeared to him perfectly absurd. "What!" said Cobbett, "you enter into a solemn treaty with my king, in which treaty you recognize my right as a British subject, to come and live and carry on trade amongst you, in return for which recognition you receive an equivalent, and after this you have the assurance to tell me that I must forbear to plead my title of British subject, forego the protection it offers me, and passively submit to injustice and ruin, lest the court and the people of America should be *offended*! What would you say, were such advice as this given to an American, living in the British dominions? What would you say, were he told, that to disown and forswear his country were the only means of avoiding legal injustice and public odium? And what, in the name of God! what pretensions has an American to superiority over a Briton? Is his country more dear to him, than mine is to me? are his fellow citizens more honest and more generous than my fellow subjects? are they more famous for learning and for noble deeds? are his rulers more powerful, more wise, more magnanimous, and more just than my sovereign? who, though his fleets command the ocean, though he is the arbiter of nations, and the acknowledged saviour of the civilized world, makes his chief glory to consist in being the defender, the friend, the father of his people."

In vain was Cobbett told, that his plea was without precedent, and that it had not been made by any British subject since the revolution. If this were the case, he thought it was high time that it should be made, and that we should cease to accept of safety and respect on such degrading conditions. Accordingly, at the first meeting of the supreme court of Pennsylvania, he presented in compliance with the law already quoted, the following petition :—

Benjamin Rush, } Supreme Court of Pennsylvania,
versus }
 William Cobbett. } case, December term, No. 3.

To the Honourable the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, the Petition of William Cobbett, the defendant in the above action, an alien, and a subject of the king of Great Britain, sheweth:—

That he is sued in the action above mentioned, in which the matter in dispute exceeds the sum or value of five hundred dollars, exclusive of costs; that he is desirous to remove the said cause for trial into the next Circuit Court of the United States, to be holden for the district of Pennsylvania, and hath good and sufficient security ready here in court, to engage for his entering in said Circuit Court, on the first day of its session, a copy of the process in the said action, agreeably to the act entitled, "An act to establish the Judicial Courts of the United States;" and also for his appearing in the said Circuit Court.

He therefore prays the Honourable the Court that security may be taken for the purposes aforesaid, and that the said cause may be removed to the said Circuit Court of the United States accordingly.

WILLIAM COBBETT.

Philadelphia, 30th December 1797.

William Cobbett being duly sworn, saith that the facts within stated are true.

30th December 1797.

WILLIAM COBBETT.

The consideration of this petition was put off to the next session, which was held in March 1798. Before, however, proceeding to relate the fate of it, we will transcribe Mr. Cobbett's account of the sensation which its presentation produced on the court and the auditory.

"It was towards the evening of the last day of the session, when Mr. Thomas, albeit unused to the modest mood, stole up gently from his seat, and in a faint and trembling voice,

told the Bashaw Mc'Kean, that he had a petition to present in behalf of William Cobbett. For some time he did not make himself heard. There was a great talking all round the bar; Levi, the lawyer, was reading a long formal paper to the judges, and the judges were laughing over the chit chat of the day. Amidst the noisy mirth that surrounded him, there stood poor Thomas, with his papers in his hands, like a culprit at school, just as the boys are breaking up. By and by, one of those pauses, which frequently occur even in the most numerous and vociferous assemblies, encouraged him to make a fresh attempt: "I present," says he, "may it please your honours, a petition in behalf of William Cobbett." The moment the sound of the word "Cobbett" struck the ear of Mc'Kean, he turned towards the bar, and having learnt the subject of the petition, began to storm like a madman. A dead silence ensued. The little scrubby lawyers, with whom the courts of Pennsylvania, like the courts of Westminster, are continually crowded, crouched down for fear, just like a brood of poultry, when the kite is preparing to pounce in amongst them, whilst hapless Thomas, who stood up piping like a straggled chicken, seemed already to feel the talons of the judicial bird of prey. He proceeded, however, to read the petition, which being very short, was got through with very little interruption. When he came to the words *subject of the king of Great Britain*, Mc'Kean did indeed grin most horribly, and he was distinctly heard to say, "*insolent scoundrel*," "*damned aristocrat*," "*damned Englishman*," &c. &c. But neither these execrations, nor the savage looks that accompanied them, prevented Cobbett from fulfilling his purpose. He went up to the clerk of the court, took the book in his hand, and holding it up, in order that it might be visible in all parts of the court, he swore in a voice that every one might hear, that he preserved his allegiance to his king; after which, he put on his hat, and walked out of court, followed by the admiration of the few, and by the curses of the many."

Before proceeding further in our account of the judicial

proceedings against Cobbett, we must relate a particular circumstance, which tended in a great degree to excite the animosity of Judge Mc'Kean towards him, and which contributed not a little to exasperate the party to which *his honour* belonged. We will not enter into the discussion of how far it was an act of common prudence or discretion, on the part of Cobbett, to publish any thing at this precise period in his paper, which might have a tendency to increase the prejudice which prevailed against him, or to augment the hatred which he well knew rankled in the breast of the judge towards him; from the moment, however, that the following letter appeared, the fate of Cobbett, as a resident in the city of Philadelphia was decided :

Washington, Pennsylvania, Sept. 19th, 1799.

SIR,

I have been requested to send you the following certificate, signed by a respectable person of this place, you will be kind enough to insert it in your paper, as soon as possible, and endeavour to have it inserted in some other city paper—the facts may be relied on.

MR. COBBETT.

I am yours, &c.

G. HENRY KEPPLE.

"PHILADELPHIA.

I do hereby certify, that THOMAS Mc'KEAN, in the year 1776, at the head of a respectable battalion in Amboy, at which time and place I was present, did in a dastardly and cowardly manner, relinquish his command, by basely withdrawing himself from said battalion in a private and concealed manner, thereby avoiding what he justly merited for his conduct; and I do also certify, that from his tyrannical, arbitrary, imposing conduct upon the soldiery, not a single man in the battalion ever loved, feared, or respected him; they even looked upon him as a base, tyrannical, overbearing coward. I do also certify, that on account of his base conduct, the said battalion had agreed to give HIS HONOUR,

the honour of marching out of camp with the rogues' march, as the rich reward of his merit. I do also certify, that Thomas Mc'Kean used his utmost influence in procuring an exchange of Governor Mc'Kinley, (a man taken prisoner *in his bed*), in preference to General William Thompson, a brave officer, taken fighting at the head of his men at the Three Rivers, who was justly entitled to a preference from a previous capture, agreeably to the rules and regulations of war; that in consequence of this, His Honour bore the heat of the day, and the burden of the lash of General Thompson's horsewhip at the coffee house in Philadelphia, without making any opposition, but submitting to it in such a manner, as to make every person believe that he merited all that HIS HONOUR received. I do also certify, that General Thompson gave HIS HONOUR notice, when and where he might be found, and if any satisfaction was required, as a soldier or a gentleman, he might receive it; this he refused in a cowardly manner. I do also certify, that Thomas Mc'Kean, in consequence of the horsewhipping, did by a litigious law-suit attempt to ruin the peace and happiness of General Thompson's family, and reduce them, if possible, to indigence. I do also certify, that Thomas Mc'Kean, as a base speculator, purchased soldiers' certificates, who were almost starving through want, at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per pound, and immediately afterwards purchased the confiscated property of a clerical gentleman, which he now occupies, with the same certificates at their full value, viz. 20s. in the pound, &c.

Signed G. BLAKENEY."

Could Mr. Cobbett suppose for a moment that an exposure of this kind would not array against him a host of enemies, who espoused the cause of Mc'Kean, and render that judge his most inveterate, his most irreconcilable foe? Could he expect the slightest impartiality from the man, the infamy of whose character he had blazoned forth in his paper, and had exhibited to the whole city of Philadelphia, and in some measure to all America, the unworthiness of the man, who

by the voice of his fellow citizens had been seated in the judicial chair, to administer the laws of the country? It was inconsiderate actions like these, which rendered his life one continual wrestling match, and not without a liberal share of hardship and difficulty. His character was resolute, self-willed, and obstinate; and conscious of the gigantic powers which he possessed, he hesitated not at the first impulse of the moment to exercise them, without immediately reflecting on the consequences that might ensue to him.

To return, however, to the action of Rush. The consideration of Mr. Cobbett's petition was postponed till the March term 1798, which gave Kite Mc'Kean time to ruminate on the novel adventure. On one hand, was a violation of the constitution and laws of the general government, on the other, the escape of his prey. Out of two evils, says a proverb, choose the least, and Kite Mc'Kean, as Cobbett styles him, chose on this occasion, just as any other kite would have chosen. When the court met, he did indeed listen for about an hour to a sort of contention, which Thomas and Hopkinson called *law argument*, and which was full as edifying, though not quite so entertaining as the disputes with which Cobbett had been frequently delighted in his juvenile days, between punchinello and the devil. While the lawyers were arguing, the judges were engaged in a conversation, which from the marks of risibility apparent on their countenances, seemed to be much more diverting than the contest between the puppets of the bar. When, therefore, this pleasant conversation was over, Mc'Kean turning his head towards Hopkinson, bawled out "*Ha'n't you most done?*" This put an end to the *law argument* at once. No showman, with the help of his wire, ever produced more ready or more implicit obedience, and Kite Mc'Kean now hastened to put an end to the farce, by declaring without the least hesitation, without even consulting his associates, and without giving any reason whatever for his decision, *that the petition of William Cobbett should not be granted.*

Cobbett was, however, in a great degree prepared for that

decision, for as he was going into the court house to hear the matter argued, he met Mr. Coale, a young man, who lived and studied with Hopkinson, the lawyer of Rush. After the usual interchange of civilities, Coale said, "What are you doing here. You are going to remove your cause, are you not?"

"Yes," replied Cobbett.

"Then you wont succeed," said Coale.

"Why?" asked Cobbett. "How do you know I sha'n't?"

"Why," replied Coale, "*the court are against you.* I can tell you that."

"What!" ejaculated Cobbett. "Have they then decided the matter, before they have heard the parties? They surely cannot be such barefaced rascals."

"Well," said Coale, with great indifference, "you'll see."

"And sure enough," says Cobbett, "I did see in a very little time. This Coale was in all the secrets of the lawyer of Rush, and let Coale's prediction be compared with the decision of the court, and with the manner in which that decision was given, and then a correct judgment may be formed of the motives from which the petition was rejected."

The rejection of his petition caused great uneasiness to Cobbett, for he could not but form one opinion as to what the result would be, were Mc'Kean to be one of the judges, who were to preside at his trial. "Such is the manner," says Cobbett, "in which *written* constitutions are observed. That indefatigable constitution grinder Tom Paine, told his silly partisans in England, *that they had no constitution at all*, and this he represented as a most insupportable grievance. Now," says he, "in America, it is not so. If you ask an American citizen, whether a certain procedure be constitutional, or not, he takes down the book from the shelf, opens it, turns to the article that treats on the subject in question, and gives you an answer in a moment. Very true, Thomas; so you see I took down my copy of the constitution and of the constitutional law, I turned to the article and the section that treated of the subject in question, and I prayed the

judges to grant my petition accordingly, but the judges laughed at me and the constitution too."

The vindictive judge of Pennsylvania having by the rejection of Cobbett's petition, determined not to let go his grasp of "the infamous slanderer," he was compelled to submit to his jurisdiction, with very little hope indeed of escaping a ruinous decision. He, however, took every precaution that was in his power. He employed Messrs. Edward Tilghman and William Rawle as his counsellors, and to them he afterwards added Mr. Harper, a man, on whose talents and whose spirit, he placed a perfect reliance, but who in the end most grossly and scandalously deceived him. The necessary steps were also taken to insure a special jury, who, it was thought by his lawyers and his friends, would be a sufficient protection against the intrigues of the plaintiff and the tyranny of the court.

At the next term, 1798, he was served with a jury list, which he struck, but the trial was put off. He was served with another jury list in December term, 1798: with another in March term, 1799; with another in September term, 1799; and at every term, although the juries were struck by him, and although he was always ready, the trial was put off. At last, on the 13th December 1799; it was resolved to bring it to issue. The moment Cobbett saw the jury list, "Ah!" said he, to a friend that happened to be with him, "the action of Rush is to be tried this time." They looked over the list again and again, and after the most mature consideration, they could find but seven men out of the forty-eight, whom they thought fit to be trusted on the trial, but as he had the power of rejecting no more than twelve, there were left of course, twenty-nine, of whom he disapproved, to the seven of whom he did approve, and as every one of these seven was struck off by Rush, there remained not a single man on the jury, in whose integrity he had the slightest confidence.

But there were other circumstances highly advantageous to his adversary. Mc'Kean, better known in England under the title of the democratic judge, was now become governor

of the state, and had by the early exercise of his power, struck terror into all the officers under his control. Shippen was the senior justice on the bench of the supreme court, and he was in eager expectation of succeeding to the post of chief justice, but Mc'Kean kept him in suspense, in a sort of state of probation, till the action of Rush against Cobbett was decided.

Singularly favourable, however, as these circumstances were, there was another still more favourable wanted to encourage the American Sangrado to push the cause on to trial; this was the absence of Cobbett from Philadelphia. He had several months before publicly signified his resolution to quit Pennsylvania, should Mc'Kean be elected governor of the state, and every one knew he would be as good as his word. Indeed, it was generally known that his books, furniture, &c. &c. were already sent off to New York, but Cobbett remained in the vicinity of Philadelphia, in order to be present at the trial, if it should come on.

On the 7th December there was no prospect of the cause coming on to trial, on the 8th therefore he set off for New York, where his affairs required his presence. From that place he sent forth the following address to the subscribers of his Porcupine's Gazette.

“ GENTLEMEN,

Agreeably to my notification made by advertisement of 11th December, I now address to you the farewell number of the Porcupine's Gazette. Remembering as you must my solemn promise to quit Pennsylvania, in case my old democratic Judge Mc'Kean should be elected governor, and knowing, as you now do, that he is elected to that office, there are, I trust, very few of you, who will be surprised to find that I am no longer in that degraded and degrading state.

My removal from Philadelphia to New York would certainly be sufficient apology for the suspension of my paper from the 20th October, when the last number was published to the present time, and were I inclined to resume and continue it, I am persuaded it would be honoured with a welcome, appro-

private to the return of an absent friend, but the renewal of this intercourse between us, pleasing as it would be to me also, under other circumstances, cannot take place, either now or at any other time.

"My gazette, gentlemen, instead of being a mine of gold to me, as it has been generally supposed, has never yielded me a farthing of clear profit, and therefore, in laying it down, I lose nothing but a most troublesome and weighty burden. I must confess, however, that this consideration was no inducement to the step, which I have taken. *Gain* was never in any situation of my life, a primary object with me. The other branches of my business enabled me to support the loss incurred by the publication of my paper, and it was my intention, even after I had fully ascertained and sensibly felt the unproductiveness of it, to continue it until the month of March 1801, but as this intention was entirely founded on the persuasion of the public utility of the continuation, it fell, of course, the moment that persuasion was removed from my mind.

"I began my editorial career with the presidency of Mr. Adams, and my principal object was to render his administration, all the assistance in my power. I looked upon him as a stately, well-armed vessel, sailing on an expedition to combat and destroy the fatal influence of French intrigue and French principles, and I flattered myself with the hope of accompanying him through the voyage, and of partaking in a trifling degree of the glory of the enterprise; but he suddenly tacked about, and I could follow him no longer.

"For a *first rater* like Mr. Adams, to beat up in the very teeth of former maxims, professions, and declarations, might, for aught I know, be not only safe and prudent, but magnanimous also, in the sublimest degree, but for a poor little cock-boat like me, rigged only for a right-forward course to attempt to imitate the adventurous manœuvre, would have been the very extreme of vanity and presumption; while on the other hand, to continue my course alone would have been

dangerous, useless, and absurd. I therefore waited for the first fair opportunity to haul down my sails, to lie to, and quietly to contemplate the retreating commodore, surrounded with my more versatile companions, whose happy construction enabled them to yield obedience to every signal, and to trim to every breeze.

“ While, however, I most heartily congratulate my brethren on the pliability of their principles, and the consequent respectability of their situation ; while I, admiring with what speed and address they retrace their route, and congratulate them on the approach of the time, when they are to receive a pardon from the much abused Talleyrand, and the other rulers of the, yet dear sister Republic ; while I thus cordially bestow on them my congratulations, there are some few things, on which I humbly presume I may be permitted to congratulate myself. Yes, I must congratulate myself on having established a paper, carried it to a circulation unparalleled in extent, and preserved this circulation to the last number, without the aid of any of those base and parasitical arts, by which patronage to American newspapers is generally obtained and preserved. I congratulate myself on having in the progress of this paper, uniformly supported, with all my feeble powers, the cause of true religion, sound morality, good government, and *real* liberty. I congratulate myself on never having in a single instance been the sycophant of the sovereign people, and on having persisted in spite of calumny, threats, prosecutions, and violence from the one side, and of praises, promises, and caresses from the other ; in spite of the savage howlings of the sans culottes, and the soothing serenades of the federalists (for I have heard both under my window). I congratulate myself on having, in spite of all these, persisted in openly and unequivocally avowing my attachment to my native country, and my allegiance to my king ; and with still greater pride, I congratulate myself on being the first, and perhaps the only man, who, since the revolution, has in open court refused to

take shelter under the title of citizen, and demanded justice as a subject of king George; finally, I congratulate myself in having the entire approbation of every man of sense, candour, and integrity, the disapprobation of every fool, the hatred of every malignant whig, and the curse of every villain.

I am, gentlemen,

Your most obliged,

And most obedient servant,

WILLIAM COBBETT "

The following is too characteristic of Cobbett to be omitted, for having drawn the following picture of the Philadelphians, he proceeds to congratulate them on the numerous blessings which they are supposed to enjoy.

"There are, doubtless," he says, "many exceptions, but the native Philadelphians, in general, are the most suspicious, envious, haughty, and yet mean characters, that ever existed upon the face of the earth. They are lazy, insolent, and above their occupation, from which cause, foreigners and people from the eastward supplant them in every branch of business, and grow rich, while the natives are daily falling into embarrassments, poverty, and insignificance. Hence they naturally become envious and spiteful with respect to foreigners, and yet, were it not for the industry and enterprise of foreigners and people from the eastward, their city would soon be without trade.

"And now," continues Cobbett, "my dear Philadelphians, I will for the present take my leave of you, wishing you joy of the numerous blessings you possess, to the exclusion of us less happy mortals. I wish you joy of your new governor, 'His Excellency Thomas Mc'Kean, Esquire, Doctor of Laws, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c.' I wish you joy of his worthy successor, the Father in Law, Arnold; I wish you joy of your new Supreme Judge, the Honourable Hugh Brackenridge, Esquire, I wish you joy of him with all my soul; I wish you joy of your House of Assembly; I wish you

joy of your Leib, your Logans, your Dallas, your Tench Coxe, your Mc'Clenachan, and your Captain Duane, and his company of volunteers: I wish you joy of your 50,000 dollars water tax, and of the philanthropic labours of Tommy Parker and citizen Latrobe. I wish you joy of your President's house, and of your other noble enterprises; I wish you joy of your *permanent* bridge over the Schuykill, which, if not neglected and too much exposed to the inclemency of the elements, will certainly last as long as the paper on which it is drawn. As I am a shareholder in the noble undertaking, I would beg leave to suggest, as the most effectual means of rendering the bridge really permanent, the propriety of having it framed and glazed without a moment's delay. I wish you joy of your superb canal, and of your superb canal lottery, No. 11. I wish you joy, without the least spark of envy lurking in my bosom, indeed I wish you joy of your philanthropic insolvent laws; of your payments by *ticket* and *advertisement*; and though last, not least, I wish you joy, by the soul of Sangrado, I wish you joy of your DOCTOR."

Mr. Cobbett was now in Philadelphia to await the issue of his trial, although little doubt remained on his mind as to the result of it. Some vague reports were afloat that Rush, on the advice of his lawyers, was recommended to drop the action, but although he publicly breathed peace and philanthropy, he secretly in his breast determined by *war* to be the ruin of his opponent; and it must be confessed that the following description of Rush, as given and circulated by Cobbett just previously to the trial, was not much calculated to allay the ebullitions of Rush's rancorous revenge.

"That a low-bred fellow like Rush, whom the troubled motions of rebellion had brought bubbling up from the mud of society; that a fellow who had extolled his drugs in newspapers, pamphlets, and books without number, and who had in these various publications not only ridiculed, decried, and abused both the practice and the persons of the first medical gentlemen in the country, but had contemptuously placed

them beneath his herd of undisciplined practitioners, his auctioneers, his negroes, and his old women; that such a mushroom being, such a notorious despoiler of the medical character, should have the assurance to appeal to the law, the moment his own practice was assailed, would have excited universal indignation amongst any people, but the poor, tame, trodden-down citizens of Philadelphia, must appear totally unaccountable to every foreign reader."

Rush had unfortunately for himself a short time previously to the trial coming on, published a canting address to the clergy, in which he says, "That *law suits* should be discouraged as much as possible. It is with inexpressible pleasure that I have lately seen an account of a recommendation from the Presbyterian synod to the churches under their care, to settle all disputes after the manner of the primitive Christians and the *Friends*, (this Cobbett calls a slobber for the Quakers,) by arbitration. Blessed event in the history of mankind! may their practice spread amongst all sects of Christians, and may it prove a prelude of that happy time foretold in scripture, when war and murder shall be no more."

That this cant on the part of Rush should escape the castigation of Cobbett was not to be expected, for he thus attacks him, "There he is again, the canting Rush; but when his professions are brought to the test, when he is urged to put them in practice, he laughs at those who were foolish enough to think him sincere. He could not find words enough to express his pleasure at hearing that the synod had protested against law suits, but he could not be persuaded, even by his confidential lawyer, to forbear going to law himself. Observe, too, that this meek-minded moralist, who, in conjunction with his Quaker friends, has been constantly hatching some peace-making project, observe, I say, that this love-seeking saint, who feels such yearnings, such gripings, and such bowel-bankerings for the blessed time when *war* and *law suits* shall be no more, has out of two sons made shift to fabricate a lieutenant and a lawyer."

Of the nature of the charges which were brought against Cobbett in this celebrated action, the following may be taken as a fair and just sample :

- 1st. He stood charged with calling Dr. Rush *a vain boaster*.
- 2nd. _____ with calling him *a quack*.
- 3rd. _____ with calling him *Sangrado*.
- 4th. _____ with saying that he *slew his patients*.

To follow the pleadings of his counsel in the substantiation of the truth of these charges, would be considered as tedious and prolix, but we will give Cobbett's own interpretation of them, especially as in his supposed address to the jury, he mentions many circumstances and incidents, which throw considerable light upon his affairs at this important period of his life.

"It would, I believe," said Cobbett, "be very difficult to make out such an application as would, according to the strict letter of the law, establish any one of the charges preferred by the plaintiff, but I scorn to take shelter under a subterfuge; it is for my enemies to have recourse to the perversion of the law. I am proud to acknowledge that all the censorious expressions, which I am, on this occasion, accused of having published, were not only published by me, but were pointed at Doctor Benjamin Rush, and moreover that they were not only pointed at Rush, but were so pointed for the express purpose of destroying his practice, as far as that practice corresponded with the well known and justly abhorred system of depletion.

"Neither will I distract your minds, (*which God knows, are by nature sufficiently confused,*) by controverting the unfair constructions of the opposite counsel. I shall admit most of the meanings which they have attributed to my words, and those which I do not admit, I shall clearly prove not to exist.

"Imprimis. I have called Doctor Rush *a vain boaster* I aver this to be *true*, and prove it by Rush's own publications. On the 12th September 1793, he published in all the papers, that with his *newly-discovered remedies*, there wa

no more danger to be apprehended from the yellow fever, than from the measles or influenza. On the 17th of the same month, he wrote to the College of Physicians, that *his discovery*, as far as it went, reduced the yellow fever in point of danger and mortality to a level with a common cold. On the 3rd of October, he wrote to Dr. Rogers at New York, declaring that he had been made the instrument in the hands of a kind Providence, of curing *more* than ninety-nine patients out of a hundred; that is, that he cured a hundred out of a hundred. This was certainly boasting, and that it was vain boasting is notorious, for at the very time that he wrote and published these boastings, his remedies were making dreadful havoc, and just after the last mentioned most impudent boast was made, four patients out of six died in his own house.

"Upon your oath then, gentlemen of the jury, I ask you, is this fellow a vain boaster, or is he not?"

"2nd. I stand charged with having called Doctor Rush a *quack*. According to Addison, a quack is a *boastful pretender to physic, one, who proclaims his own medical abilities and nostrums in public places*.

"Let us now see whether or not the doctor's conduct brings him up to this definition. During the whole of the fever of 1793, and from that time to the fever of 1797, Dr. Rush made no scruple to declare, that none of the physicians, who did not follow his practice ought to be trusted with the life of a patient. Let us, however, only examine one of his advertisements, and none can then say but that I spoke the truth in calling Dr. Rush a quack.

"Doctor Rush, regretting that he is unable to comply with all the calls of his fellow citizens indisposed with the prevailing fever, recommends to them to take *his mercurial purges*, which may now be had with suitable directions at most of the apothecaries, and to lose ten or twelve ounces of blood as soon as convenient after taking the purges, if the headache and fever continue. *The almost universal success with which it has pleased God to bless the remedies of strong*

mercurial purges and bleeding in this disorder, enables Doctor Rush to insure his fellow citizens, that the risk from visiting and attending the sick at *present*, is not greater than from walking the streets. While the disease was so generally mortal, or the successful mode of treating it only partially adopted, he advised his friends to leave the city; at *present* he conceives this advice unnecessary, not only because the disease is under the power of medicine, but because the citizens, who now wish to fly into the country cannot avoid carrying the infection with them; they had better remain near to *medical aid*, and avoid exciting the infection into action."

"The quack! the notorious quack!!" exclaims Cobbett, "what is it to be near to *medical aid*, otherwise than to be near to *him*. According to his advice, it was safer to remain near him, though in the midst of pestilence, than be near any other physician, though in the sweet air of the country. This advertisement," continued Cobbett, "is the most impudent that ever was published. No Leicester Square one ever equalled it. At the very time that Rush had the impudence thus to tell the people, that there was no longer any danger, *if they used his remedies*; at the very time that he was thus advising them not to leave the city, but to remove near to medical aid, at the very time that he was blessing God for the almost universal success of his remedies, the bills of mortality were daily increasing in a dreadful degree, until at the end of one month after the infallible remedies had been in vogue, they had arisen from *twenty-three to one hundred and nineteen*."

In regard to this advertisement of Rush's, Cobbett gave him great offence by comparing it to what the cockneys called "the doctor's bills." These were issued by Spilsbury, to puff off his antiscorbutic drops, a medicine well known for upwards of twenty-six years, and which according to the puff of the doctor, had reached the remotest corners of the universe, and was a blessing to all Englishmen, who, to whatever part of the globe they might travel, could supply themselves with a medicine, which would secure them from the fatal consequences of the majority of complaints.

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duce a belief that the American resembles the Spaniard in his *person*, in his general character, or in his medical opinions, practice, and fame? Most assuredly the resemblance was meant to exist in the latter respect only, for Dr. Sangrado is described *as a tall, meager, pale man*, who had kept the shears of Clotho employed during forty years at least, and who was, in spite of all his vanity and presumption, *a down-right ninny*. If Dr. Rush had sitten for this picture, it could not have been drawn more like him.

"In regard to the resemblance in the medical opinions, practice, and fame of these two celebrated physicians, it appears by comparing Gil Blas with Dr. Rush's printed works, and with the character given to him by his counsel, Hopkinson, the resemblance between Sangrado and Rush will be found most striking.

"Dr. Sangrado, says Gil Blas, was a man of *singular opinions*. Dr. Rush, says Mr. Hopkinson, his counsel, possesses *singularity of opinion* in almost every thing.

"Dr. Sangrado drew blood, *porringer* after *porringer*. Dr. Rush *pint* after *pint*.

"Dr. Sangrado employed *copious bleedings* to supply the want of perspiration. Dr. Rush did the same.

"Dr. Sangrado says that it is a gross error to think *that blood is necessary to the preservation of life*. Dr. Rush calls it the triumph of *reason* to *prescribe bleeding almost to death*.

"Dr. Sangrado sends a footboy, a lacquey, to bleed and drench the citizens of Valladolid. Dr. Rush qualifies negroes and old women to bleed and purge those of Philadelphia.

"Dr. Sangrado wrote a book, and so did Dr. Rush, *in which both of them declared their resolution to stick to their principles and practice to the last extremity*.

"Dr. Sangrado is called by his cotemporaries the *Hippocrates of Spain*. Dr. Rush's cotemporaries call him *the Hippocrates of Pennsylvania*. The only shade of difference is in their practice; the American employs doses of *mercure* and jalap, while the Spaniard contents himself with draught

of warm water, and it must be confessed that the latter is at least as innocent as the former.

"But, gentlemen of the jury, there needed no such laboured comparison to prove to you, that the name of Sangrado was fairly applicable to Dr. Rush. You know, gentlemen, that Dr. Rush has erected his bleeding system upon the opinions of Botallus, a French physician, whose name he mentions with great applause, in page 830 of his Account of the Yellow Fever. This Botallus endeavoured to introduce the practice of *excessive bleeding*, which was condemned by the faculty of medicine of Paris, and you well know, that the practice of his American follower was honoured with something very much like condemnation, by the College of Physicians at Philadelphia. But the most curious fact is, that Le Sage introduced the character of Sangrado into the novel of Gil Blas, for the express purpose of ridiculing this very Botallus. Now I have carefully examined the biography of Le Sage, and I can no where find that he was sued or prosecuted by Bleeder Botallus, so that the master in blood must have been of a more meek and forbearing disposition than the disciple; or the liberty of the press in 'the dark ages,' under a French monarch, must have been greater than it is, even in these enlightened days, under the sovereign people of America.

"The fourth and last charge preferred against me is, that I have said *that Dr. Rush slew his patients*. The passage from Porcupine's Gazette on which this charge is founded, runs thus:—'Dr. Rush, in that emphatical style, which is peculiar to himself, calls mercury the *Sampson* of medicine. In his hands and those of his partisans, it may indeed be compared to Sampson, for I verily believe, they have slain more Americans with it than ever Sampson slew of the Philistines. The Israelite slew his thousands, but the Rushites have slain their tens of thousands.'"

In the foregoing passage lay the head and front of Cobbett's offending, for by his enemies it was tortured into an assertion, that Dr. Rush was in the habit of *killing people with deadly*

weapons; and secondly, they accuse him of *killing people with his physic*. But take the whole passage as it stands, with all its implications and insinuations; strip it of its figurative quality, insist upon its being literally understood; make it positive instead of doubtful, and then cut it up into simple sentences, considering each as having been made use of, detached from all the rest, and after having strained, twisted, garbled, and gutted the whole of it, it must be allowed that something like an accusation of killing people with deadly weapons may be made out. "But," says Cobbett, "it is not thus, that a man's words are to be treated; his person and his estate are not to be brought into jeopardy by such miserable pettifogging interpretations; pitiful indeed would be the liberty of speech and of the press, were every sentence liable to a judicial criticism of this sort. No, no; the common law of England, which as I have before observed, is in this case, the law of America, encourages no such uncandid, no such litigious proceeding. That law, I had almost said that *holy* law, which is the result of the researches of wisdom actuated by the spirit of justice; that law, which, while it has clad good character in a coat of mail, has thrown a shield before the body of the critic, the satirist, and the public censor; that law tells you, that the words on which an action of slander is grounded, shall be understood neither in their *best* sense nor their *worst* sense, but that the words shall be taken in the same sense as they would be understood by those who hear or read them, and for that purpose all the words ought to be taken together."

—*Buller's Nisi Prius*.

The chief intent of Rush in bringing his action against Cobbett, was to establish the fact, that it was not so much against his remedies, nor his peculiar mode of practice, but that he was actuated by private malice, and that the public good was not the basis of his publications. To establish this point, three witnesses were examined, all physicians and

* This was Mr. Cobbett's construction of the English law of libel, during his residence in America; he had not, however, been long in England, before he saw good reason to alter his opinion.

pupils of Dr. Rush, viz. Dr. Mease, Dr. Coxe, and Dr. Dewees. The first of these witnesses deposed, that he heard Cobbett say, speaking of Dr. Rush, "*Damn him, he had better withdraw his suit, or I will persecute him while living, and his memory after his death.*" Cobbett explains this circumstance in the following manner:—

"I went to the island, where Mease was king Robinson Crusoe, along with an English captain, who had some business with a sick sailor. While the captain was gone to the hospital; Mease asked me into his apartment, brought out a bottle of wine, and gave me a pressing invitation to dinner. The invitation was declined, but two or three glasses of wine were drunk, and a conversation of the rallying, bantering kind took place, and as it was impossible to be with a Rushite for a quarter of an hour, without being pestered with an eulogium on the fraternity, and the abominable remedies they employ, Rush and his law-suit soon became the topic. I certainly did, on this occasion, as on many others, make use of words, strongly expressive of my resentment at Rush's insolent and vexatious appeal to the law, and I well remember threatening to *make him repent of it*, but as to damning him, I utterly deny it, for although I have to atone for too many sins of that sort, I am certain that I never so far degraded a curse as to bestow it on Rush; and with respect to my saying that I would persecute his memory after his death, the thing is absolutely incredible; I might as reasonably have threatened to persecute the memory of a butterfly or a maggot. Can the *Rush*, says Job, grow up without mire? while it is yet in its greenness, *and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb*. Upon reading these words, one is tempted to believe, that the holy seer had the Pennsylvanian Hippocrates in his eye, for although he is yet in his greenness; though he is still alive, his fame has perished of itself, it is withered and dead. Thus," continues Cobbett, "as the words imputed to me were uttered eight months *after* the suit was commenced, they cannot establish the malice imputed to the publications, for which the action was brought, because they express re-

sentment against Rush *for his conduct subsequently to those publications.*"

Having thus disposed of the evidence of Dr. Mease, Cobbett next examines that of Dr. John Redman Coxe, who deposed, that on the 2d October 1797, which was some weeks after the action was commenced, he was in Mr. Cobbett's house, and that he heard him say, "that he did not believe he should have said so much on bleeding or mercurials, if Dr. Rush had not been the founder of the system."

"Yes," says Cobbett, "this subaltern Sangrado did really come to my house about this time, and did very earnestly intercede with me in behalf of his preceptor and by the same token, I remember, that he presented me with a list of the physicians of Philadelphia, whom he very strenuously persuaded me to lampoon. Upon this list were the names of Khun, Wistar, Parke, and several others; and the base accusation which he wished me to prefer against these respectable gentlemen and truly eminent physicians, was, *that they had deserted the poor in the hour of distress*, than which nothing could have been more false and malicious, or would have produced against the parties more public odium and reproach. '*Dam'me,*' said the little bleeder, '*shoot one of your quills at them; you'll set Wistar dancing mad, and he's a sly democrat.*' I, however, resisted this eloquent solicitation. I felt no inclination to set Doctor Wistar dancing mad, for whatever might be his political opinions, he kept them to himself, and he was always considered a man of great private worth.

"Such," continues Cobbett, "are the pupils, the friends, the witnesses of Rush, such are the fellows, who have the impudence to come forward in a court of justice, and accuse me of underhand malice. Happy would it have been for them, had they been yet unborn. Their great leader will sink, and will drag them all down with him to the bottom of the mire."

The last of this goodly trio of betrayers of private conversation was William Dewees, and in handling this individual,

Cobbett takes the opportunity of retorting the charge brought against him, *vis. that he was a wretch cast up from the slime of mankind*, in allusion to the humble condition of his parents. Unfortunately for Dr. Dewees there was a book in the Philadelphia library, entitled Smyth's Tour in the United States, by referring to which, it was ascertained that when Capt. Smyth was confined as a prisoner of war in the jail of Philadelphia during the revolution, the name of the jailer was "*Thomas Dewees, as tyrannical, cruel, infamous a villain as ever disgraced human nature.*" Capt. Smyth was for some time under the control of this tyrant, but when he joined the royal army, and came with it from the head of Elk to Philadelphia, on the morning of the day that a detachment of the British army first entered Philadelphia, a number of Americans fell into his hands, and amongst the rest Thomas Dewees, the cruel tyrannical jailer, under whose iron talons he had suffered so long and severely. As soon as this wretch found that Capt. Smyth was the officer commanding the party, his terror was not to be described, as he expected nothing less than instantaneous death; he fell on his knees, begged for his life, and for mercy. Captain Smyth told him that for the sake of his innocent wife and children, he would forgive him, as he promised sincere contrition, and proposed to take the oaths of allegiance to his majesty; this he readily performed, and had afterwards the audacity to apply to Earl Cornwallis to be appointed deputy provost marshal over the rebel prisoners in Philadelphia, in the accomplishment of which pursuit, however, he very justly failed.

"And it is such men as these," says Cobbett, "who could brand me 'as a wretch cast up from the slime of mankind.' The progenitorship of Dr. Dewees was not long a secret in every city of America, and I am told that he bitterly repented of the part which he took in the prosecution of Rush, on account of the exposure to which it gave rise."

Dr. Dewees was called upon as a witness to establish the charge of *malice* against Cobbett, and he deponed, that being

at Cobbett's house in the month of January 1797, nine months *previously* to the date of the publications, on which the action was founded, he heard him reprobate the eulogium on Rittenhouse, which Rush had just then delivered, and that on this occasion, he heard Cobbett say, that the eulogium was too republican, adding, "*Damn him, I will attack him for it.*" Hence it was intended to show, that the publications of September were no more than a fulfilment of the threat of January, and that Rush's system of bleeding was attacked from *political* motives, and not from any opinion that the defendant entertained of its dangerous effects. Moses Levi indeed said, Cobbett never attacked the doctor's politics, "not a word," says he, "was ever seen upon *that* head; his attack was designed to be on a part more injurious to the *man*; he *threatens* in January, and *executes* in September. The arrow was stuck in his side, he did not attempt to draw it out at the moment, but he let it remain till a fit period for making it felt."

On this subject, Cobbett thus expresses himself, "When a small lawyer gets hold of a figure of rhetoric, he uses it as awkwardly as a baby does a knife, sometimes seizing it by the handle, and sometimes by the blade, while the compassionate jury sit trembling with anxiety for the consequences. Such must also have been the feelings of the jury in my case, whilst listening to the illustrations of Levi. But the nonsense of my little Moses' figure, palpable as it is, is not quite so palpable as its falsehood. It is false, *notoriously* false, to say that I never attacked the doctor's eulogium on Rittenhouse. I did attack it, nor did the arrow, as the Israelite calls it, remain long to rankle in his side. I did threaten in January 1797, and there is not a man amongst you, who does not know, that in my Censor for the very same month of January, I put my threat into execution. Further, which of you has not read "The last Will and Testament of Peter Porcupine," published in March 1797,* and which of you then does not know, that the eulogium was there attacked a second time,

* See page 166.

previously to the publishing of the words laid in the declaration. The silly sans-culottish eulogium was not only attacked, but was destroyed, and was by myself and every body else completely forgotten before the month of September. What then becomes of the support, which this part of the testimony of Dewees is intended to give to the charge of malice? How it dwindles and disappears."

There was, however, one particular part of the evidence of Dewees, which gave Cobbett considerable annoyance, which was, that this subaltern Sangrado declared that *Mr. Cobbett himself employed him as a physician in his family, and moreover recommended him to his friends.*

"As a conclusive refutation," says Cobbett, "of the former part of that statement, as an unquestionable proof that Dewees never was my physician, I might remind him that Mr. Cobbett *is yet alive.* I might apply to him the pithy epigram of Boileau to Dr. Pezrault:"—

Tu dis, que tu Monsieur l'Américain,
M'as guéri d'une forte maladie!
La preuve, que tu ne fus pas mon médecin
C'est, que je suis encore en vie.*

Dr. Dewees was asked, how long he had attended in Mr. Cobbett's family, and he replied, from the return of the citizens in 1798, which certainly was intended to convey the meaning, that he had given all the medical assistance required in the family, from the autumn of 1798 to the autumn of 1799. "Now recollect," says Cobbett, "that this man was sworn to tell the truth, the *whole* truth, and nothing but the truth, *so help him God,* then I beg attention to the following true story:"—

Dr. Budd was Mr. Cobbett's family doctor, from the time that he arrived in Philadelphia to the time that he quitted it;

* Imitated.

You say then, you blood-sucking elf,
That you've been our physician all round,
I swear that you ne'er bled myself,
And the proof is—I'm yet above ground.

but in the summer of 1798, Dr. Budd retired into New Jersey, where he remained till the people returned to the city. Mrs. Cobbett was at that time pregnant, and as a precaution, in case of need, some one was sought for to supply the place of Doctor Budd. Mr. Cobbett was then situated at Bustleton, fifty miles from Dr. Budd, twelve from Philadelphia, and eight from Dr. Dewees. Very pressing solicitations were made to Dr. Budd, who would have staid at Bustleton on purpose, had not his family demanded his presence. No one from the city could be thought on, because, besides the great risk arising from his constant employment, the gentleman engaged might die before the time arrived, and Mr. Cobbett knew that the friends with whom he lived, had some objection to receiving into their house, persons coming from the seat of infection and mortality. Under these circumstances, Dewees was applied to, but not till after repeated efforts had been made in vain, to secure the attendance of a reputable *female* practitioner. Thus then granny Dewees was introduced into Mr. Cobbett's family, as a last shift, a poor despicable *pis aller*.

Mrs. Cobbett returned to the city before the child was born, and Dr. Budd would now have been the man, but as granny Dewees had been *bespoken*, and as he had been put to the trouble of two or three journeys to Bustleton, it was determined that he should attend, but not without the express promise of Mrs. Cobbett to her husband, that she would swallow *none of his drugs*, and that Doctor Budd should be called, if any medical assistance should be found necessary. All terminated well. Granny Dewees performed his part as expertly as any skilful dame in the parish could have done, and there ended his *attendance* for that time.

In the summer of 1799, the parties were distributed precisely in the same way as they were in 1798. The dysentery raged in the neighbourhood of Mr. Cobbett, who was afraid that his little boy had got the disorder, and who thereupon wrote a note to the *pis aller* Dewees, describing the state of the child, requesting him to ride over to Bustleton, and to

bring with him what he thought might be of use. He attended the next day, and left a packet of powders. As soon as the man of science was gone, Mr. and Mrs. Cobbett, and a young man, who had long lived in the family, held a *consultation*, not on the patient, but on the drugs, which after a very deliberate discussion, it was unanimously resolved to *throw into the fire.**

The child recovered; Dewees attributed the recovery to his mercurials, and has, there is no doubt, recorded it amongst the wonders he has wrought. He was suffered to hug himself in the deception, and there ended his *attendance* in Mr. Cobbett's family for the second and last time.

"Now," asks Mr. Cobbett, "was this attending in Mr. Cobbett's family from the autumn of 1798?" Dewees called accidentally at Mr. Cobbett's in the spring of 1799, and observing a mark on the little boy's arm, he asked if he had been inoculated. Mrs. Cobbett told him he had, and he well knew that he had not been the inoculator. He, therefore, knew that he had not attended in the family from the autumn of 1798.

Dewees being asked, who was Mr. Cobbett's family physician, replied: "I cannot tell." While Dewees was attending on Mrs. Cobbett, her little daughter was taken ill. Seeing the child with all the appearance of sickness about her, he asked what remedies had been applied, and was told that Doctor Budd had prescribed for her. So that he *knew*, and could have told, who was Mr. Cobbett's family doctor.

On being asked, whether he had ever been recommended by Mr. Cobbett to any other families, he replied: "Yes, frequently." Cobbett here exclaims, "Now that's a d——d lie, for the truth is this:—While I was at Bustleton, and

* There is something not very reconcileable with common sense in the line of conduct pursued by Cobbett on this occasion. He instructs Dr. Dewees to *bring with him what he thought might be of use.* The doctor follows the instructions of Cobbett, and then without trying the efficacy of the medicine, he throws it into the fire. If the child had died, whom would Mr. Cobbett have had to blame?

while the physicians were all employed or dispersed, I advised two neighbours, one in the dysentery, and one with a bleeding at the nose, to send for the *pts aller*, judging him to be somewhat better than no doctor at all. *Twice* is not frequently. *Frequently* means *oftentimes* and *commonly*. Besides, if Dewees had recollected, that the oath bound him in the name of God to tell the *whole truth*, he would have told, that at the very time he was visiting these two neighbours of mine, another neighbour was taken ill of what was thought to be the yellow fever, and that I, who could have brought Dewees to the spot in an hour, sent for Dr. Monges, first to Philadelphia, then into the Neck, and after that to Jenkintown, whence he was at last brought to the patient at twelve o'clock at night."

Having thus entered into a refutation of the charges against him, Cobbett concludes in the following energetic manner: "I have now shown you that the contents of my publications are true, and that with respect to my intentions, the imputation of malice is *false*. Every one must be convinced that the action is vexatious and groundless, that it is a war of private interests and ambition, against the safety, the happiness, and the very lives of the people. Standing then upon the firm grounds of justification, I disdain hackneyed invocations to the liberty of the press. I stand not in need of the interposition of any imaginary goddess; I seek no shelter from new discovered principles, and new fangled institutions; I ask no other rights, privileges, or immunities, than those which the humblest of my humble forefathers enjoyed. My motto is the motto of my countrymen, *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*, (we are unwilling to change the English laws,) from those laws, the common, the established, the ancient laws of England, and from those laws alone, I will accept of protection. I beg not for mercy, but I demand justice, and should that demand be despised, should the suggestions of my base persecutors be listened to, and an endeavour be made to make me a blighted picture of infamy and ruin, I venture to predict that the efforts will not only

prove impotent, but that the people of this country will repent of their compliance in so atrocious a deed. Take my word for it, *ruin* is not my fate. 'I have been young and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.' And though his persecutors should succeed in wresting from him the fruit of his care and toil, though his life should be embittered by domestic distress, it will only be the means of extorting from him fresh proofs of his fortitude and integrity, and of the baseness, the malice, the ingratitude, and perfidy of his foes; it will only give lustre to my own character, and stamp infamy on that of my persecutors. Nay, should the friends of my persecutors, their neighbours, their countrymen, and the world join in applauding an iniquitous decision, and should they all go on rejoicing to the very verge of the grave, still they and their accomplices should bear in mind, that all does not end there, and that death is not an eternal sleep. The witnesses, who have given their evidence against me, are no casuists, I ween, or they would have perceived, that giving such evidence as manifestly tends to produce a belief of what is not true, is something very like perjury, and that He, who has said, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,' will not be put off by subterfuges, and mental reservation. Nor would I have the gentlemen of the jury to forget, that there is another tribunal at which they must appear, not to judge, but to be judged; and that affecting to believe what they do not and cannot believe, though it may serve here as a convenient excuse, will not justify them in the presence of the Searcher of all hearts, in whose awful name they have promised to do justice. *There* it will not be asked, whether the plaintiff were an American and a republican, nor whether the defendant were a Briton and a royalist, the only question put to them will be, *have you acted according to your conscience?* That, and that alone, will be the subject of the inquest, and the ground of the judgment."

The 13th December, the momentous day of the trial arrived, and the court was crowded to excess, and it was no

secret that a strong party had been hired by the Rushites to applaud whatever fell from the lips of the prosecutor's counsel, which had a tendency to defame and asperse the character of the defendant. The nature of the evidence which was adduced has been previously given, and we now come to the most extraordinary charge to the jury, which ever fell from the lips of a judge, on the ground of partiality and direct falsification of the evidence, as well as the misconstruction of it. Omitting that part of the charge which applies simply to the interpretation of the law of libel, we shall confine ourselves to those points, to which the attention of the jury was particularly drawn, and in the wording of which, Judge Shippen, who tried the cause, followed the example of some of the judges in the courts of Westminster, and merged the judge in the advocate.

The following is the Charge of Shippen :

“ GENTLEMEN,

“ This is an action brought by the plaintiff against the defendant, for writing, printing, and publishing divers scandalous libels, to defame and vilify him. The defendant has pleaded that he is not guilty; his counsel, however, have acknowledged the publication of the papers, which otherwise it would have been incumbent on the plaintiff to prove. The question therefore will be, whether they amount in law to defamatory libels or not ?

“ By the law and practice in England, in the case of libels, the only task of the jury is to judge of the fact of publication, and the truth and fair application of the innuendoes; the court as judges of the law, reserving to themselves the sole power of deciding whether the paper amounts to a libel or not. But in this state, by the special direction of our constitution, the jury possess the power of judging both of the law and the fact, under the direction of the court.

“ The charges laid against the defendant are various, but they may be reduced in substance to the following: That he repeatedly calls the plaintiff a quack, an empiric; charges

him with intemperate bleeding; injudiciously administering mercury in large doses in the yellow fever; puffing himself off; writing letters and answering them himself; styling him the Sampson in medicine, charging him with murdering his patients, and slaying his thousands and tens of thousands.

"The counts laid in the declaration are fully proved by the publications, which are certainly libellous. In what manner do the defendant's counsel repel these proofs? not by justifying the truth of the matters charged against Dr. Rush, which on the contrary they have repeatedly acknowledged to be false, but by analysing the several allegations in the newspapers, and from thence drawing a conclusion that no intentional personal malice appears; which they say is the essence of the offence. Malice rests in the heart, and is only to be judged of by the words and actions of the party; the words themselves import malice, and in that case, the proof lies on the defendant to show the innocence of his intentions; if he has done that to your satisfaction, you will acquit him; but this is chiefly founded on the allegation that the attack was meant to be made on Dr. Rush's system, and not on the man; it unfortunately appears that not the least attempt is made to combat the doctor's arguments with regard to the system itself, but the attack is made merely by gross scurrilous abuse of the doctor himself. Added to this, one of the witnesses proves a declaration made by the defendant; that if Dr. Rush had not been the man, he should never have meddled with the system.

"Another ground of defence is of a more serious nature, as it leads to a more important question in our constitution. It is said, that the subject of the dispute between the plaintiff and defendant was a matter of public concern, as it related to the health and lives of our fellow citizens, and that by the words of our constitution, every man has a right to discuss such subjects in print.

"The liberty of the press, gentlemen, is a valuable right in every free country, and ought never to be unduly restrained,

but when it is perverted to the purposes of private slander, it then becomes a most destructive engine in the hands of unprincipled men. The utmost purity and integrity of heart is no shield against the shafts and arrows of malice conveyed to the world by printed publications. Verbal slander may be frequently very injurious, but slander in writing or print being more generally disseminated and more durable in its effects, is consequently infinitely more pernicious and provoking. Our state constitution of 1790 contains certainly very general words with relation to the right of a citizen to print his thoughts, and offer them to the consideration of the public, but it at the same time guards against the generality of the privilege, by expressly declaring, that every person availing himself of the liberty of the press, should be responsible for the abuse of that liberty, thus securing to our citizens the invaluable right of reputation against every malicious invader of it.

“Printed publications attacking private character are considered with great reason, by the law, as a very atrocious offence, from its evident tendency to the breach of the public peace; if men find that they can have no redress in our courts of justice for such injuries, they will naturally take satisfaction in their own way, involving perhaps their friends and families in the contest, and leading evidently to duels, murders, and perhaps to assassinations.

“The principal subject of consideration with the jury will be, what damages they are to assess. On this subject you are the **ALMOST**, uncontrollable judges; it is your peculiar province. The court have indeed the power to order a new trial where damages are excessive, but in cases of torts and injuries of this kind, *the law books say the damages must be so outrageously disproportionate to the offence, as at first blush to shock every person who hears of it*, before the court will order a new trial.

“Every one must know that offences of this kind, have for some time past too much abounded in our city; it seems high time to restrain them—that task is with you, gentlemen.

To suppress so great an evil, it will not only be necessary to give compensatory, but exemplary damages, at the same time, the damages should not be so enormous as absolutely to ruin the offenders.

"I hope no party considerations will ever have place in this court, in the administration of justice, and I entreat you, gentlemen, to banish them, in considering this subject, entirely from your breast."

As soon as Shippen had closed his charge, there was a clapping of hands amongst the people, who filled the galleries and area of the court-house, and when the verdict was pronounced, the joy of the malignant wretches broke out into loud and repeated acclamations. Nor was this joy confined to the herd of spectators; the shouting in the court-house was the next day recorded by the news printers, who exulted in this proof of the zeal and justice of their fellow citizens. The whole court appeared to be in hostility with Cobbett; for the few faint attempts that were made by Messrs. Tilghman and Rawle, to repel the abominable aspersions, which were cast on his character and conduct, were replied to by hissing and cursing from the sovereign people in the gallery and in the area of the court-house; nor did this scandalous behaviour receive any reproof from the court.

To suppose that Cobbett would remain passive under so partial a charge as that delivered by Shippen, would be at complete variance with his undaunted and unflinching character, and accordingly on the following day appeared a Letter from Peter Porcupine to the Judge Shippen, some parts of which we shall extract, as bearing immediately upon the justification of Cobbett, and the injustice of the prosecution, which had been carried on against him.

Cobbett begins by telling the judge, "that his charge had given rise to a very interesting question, viz. which is its prominent characteristic, *stupidity or malice*? This," continues Cobbett, "is a question far too knotty for me to presume to decide; I think, however, I may venture to throw some light on the subject, and in doing this, I will endeavour

to forget your private character, that it may not extort from me language derogatory to my own.

“What is the outset of your charge? a farrago of ignorance and low cunning. It is nothing more than one of those stale tricks, which have been so long practised for the purpose of making the Americans believe that they enjoy more liberty, than their former fellow subjects enjoyed; or must we look upon it as intended to flatter the jury, and give them a high opinion of their own power? If the former, if your intention were merely to keep the poor sovereign people in good humour with their present rulers, there is not much to be said. Self-preservation is the first law of nature. But if your design were, by puffing up the pride of the jury, to embolden them to gratify your and their private wishes, at the expense of justice; if this were your motive, what do you deserve?

“Be your motive, however, what it might, whether the object you had in view were to obtain and secure a good post for yourself, or to ruin me, whatever might be your end, your means were most vile, your statement respecting the law and practice of England, was a shameful falsehood, and would have been a disgrace to any other bench than that from which it came.

“Continuing in your pleader-like strain, you observe that the counsel of the defendant did not repel the charges brought against him, ‘by justifying the truth of the publications, but that on the contrary, *they have repeatedly acknowledged those publications to be false.*’ ’Tis true indeed, that my counsel, to their shame be it spoken, did not justify the truth of the publications laid in the declaration, but that they might have justified, every man in America knows well, and you know that they would have done it, had their client not been an Englishman, and had they not, like you, been in fear of Mc’Kean, and your brother slaves who filled your tribunals, and crowded your courts.

“But a misconstruction of the publications and a perversion of the evidence did not satisfy you, you seem to have

been still afraid, that in spite of such cheering encouragement, the jury might have some scruples; and, therefore, you took care to conclude with giving them an assurance, that provided they laid on damages enough, their verdict should be approved of by you. The principal subject of consideration with the jury will be, say you, what damages they are to assess. You then proceed to tell them, that they are the almost uncontrollable judges on that subject, yet that in cases of torts and injuries of this kind, the *law books* say the damages *must be so outrageously disproportionate to the offence, as at first blush to SHOCK every person who hears of it, before the court will order a new trial.*

"Bravo! *Vivat Respublica!* Huzza for our glorious Revolution! Huzza for the Sovereign People! *Vive la Liberté!* But in the midst of all this rejoicing, I had almost forgotten to ask you what *law books* you found this maxim in? In those of Robespierre and Fouquier Tinville, I suppose, or perchance in those of Pennsylvania or of Algiers. Find it where you will, however, you have applied it, and you and your country are entitled to all the honours it confers. I would give a thousand dollars, if old Price were yet alive to have an opportunity of sticking this charge of yours in one of the curls of his wig. Here, you wayward and discontented Britons, who are hankering after republicanism, look here; here you see a complete specimen of the blessings of *liberty* and *reform*. Were one of your judges to declare, that in order to induce him to grant a new trial, the punishment for calling a man a quack, must be so outrageously cruel, as at first blush to SHOCK every person who hears of it, you would stone him to death; you would shun his touch, as you would the touch of a hangman; but were you in Pennsylvania only for one month, were you only 'ameliorated' in the philanthropic city of Philadelphia, were you sovereign citizens instead of subjects, you would listen to him as patiently and submissively as a penitent does to his father confessor.

"You do indeed observe to the jury, that the damages

must not be so enormous as absolutely to ruin the offender. This was indeed a wholesome caution, it was telling them how far they might go, without endangering the success of the scheme, it was in fact saying to them: 'Ruin him in effect, but take care to do it in such a way, as will not defeat our intentions. Bilk him, embarrass him, break up his business, and plunge him into debt, but be careful not to let your malice so far overshoot the mark, as to leave us no excuse for confirming your verdict.' This was pretty language from a court to a jury. The jury followed your directions with great exactness, and the malignant slaves thought they had given me a deadly blow, but that blow, while it has had no effect upon me, has recoiled with redoubled force on themselves, their accomplices, and their city.

"But your pretext for recommending a ruinous verdict, is if possible more atrocious than the recommendation itself. 'Offences of this kind,' say you, 'have for some time past too much abounded in our city, *it seems high time to restrain them*, that task is with you, gentlemen.' So because offences of the same kind had abounded in the city; because they had passed unnoticed; because they had been tolerated, I was to be all but absolutely ruined. I was to suffer for what all others had done, and also for the negligence of courts and juries. Precious justice this!

"Yes! offences not of '*this kind*,' but of a much worse kind had indeed for a long time abounded in your city. Libels the most false, scandalous, and malicious. Publications the most obscene and most impious had long abounded, and do still abound, and had I shared in these publications, not a farthing of damages would ever have been given against me. But I was a British subject. I had defended the character of my king and country against the infamous calumnies that you and your associates suffered to be propagated. I exposed the little despots of America. I had contrasted their character with that of the king, against whom they were continually endeavouring to revive the animosity of the people, and it was for this and this alone, that you and your associates

lated me. At the very moment when you gave this scandalous charge, when you called aloud for ruin on my head, you were perfectly convinced that I had rendered America essential services; you knew that my character was unblemished, and that my conduct as a publisher, was singularly laudable; you knew that I never wilfully published falsehood; you knew, that as a bookseller I never gave circulation to a seditious, an irreligious, or an immoral publication; but that on the contrary, I had constantly endeavoured to obstruct the progress of such works, and that I had been the patron of every effort to counteract their deleterious effects. All this you knew, and with all this in your mind, you uttered the malignant charge, which I this day rescue from that oblivion, to which its stupidity had condemned it."

The trial was begun on the 13th December, and on the following day, the jury gave in their verdict, assessing the damages at 5000 dollars. "It is well known," says Cobbett, "that after every verdict, four days are allowed, previously to entering up the judgment, in order to enable the defendant to prepare for application for an arrest of judgment. On the 17th, therefore, my counsellor Mr. Edward Tilghman, made a motion for a rule to show cause why the verdict and judgment should not be set aside for excessiveness of damages, which motion was rejected by Shippen and his associates. And well it might be rejected, for on the 16th, the day before the new trial was refused, I was actually arrested for the 5000 dollars at New York, so that it appears that the plaintiff and his counsel were quite sure that a new trial would not be granted, two days, at least, before that new trial was moved for. *Vivat Respublica!* Huzza for Liberty and Revolution."

As a proof of the gross partiality, which characterized these proceedings against Mr. Cobbett, it must be noticed, that Mr. Fenno, who was sued at the same time, and for the very same pretended libel, was suffered to go off without further notice. They hated Fenno for his royalist principles, but he being an American, they knew that it would be hard

to find a jury to assess heavy damages against him; and to have given 5000 dollars against Mr. Cobbett, whilst they would perhaps only have given 100 against him, would have been too glaring a proof of their infamy.

The conduct of Dr. Rush subsequently to the trial, was truly pitiful and disgraceful. So eager was he to touch the profits of his long and unwearied labours, that in a very few hours after the verdict was given, he sent off expresses to execute the judgment at New York, and that the high spirit and dignity of the family might be preserved, his son, who was a lawyer, was packed off on the errand. It was reported in the malicious city of Philadelphia, that he had seized Mr. Cobbett, and put him in jail; but the fact was, that fast as Rush rode, the friends of Cobbett rode faster, and though he had plenty of time to go, bail was ready for them before they asked it. This, it appears, provoked them exceedingly, for upon the return of the bum-bailiff lawyer, they sent the sheriff to fasten upon the effects, which Cobbett had advertised for sale in his house at Philadelphia; they lodged an attachment in the hands of Mr. Morgan, Cobbett's agent in that city; they hunted out his clerk, who was left at Philadelphia to collect debts, and attached all that he might have or receive belonging to him, nay, they had the unparelleled meanness to go out to Bustleton and lodge attachments with every one whom they suspected to have a horse, a cow, a dog, or any thing of his in their possession. They afterwards made a sale of the property they found in his house, where amidst the exulting yells of the sovereign people, they sold for about four hundred dollars, what ought to have brought nine hundred or a thousand. "At this sale," says Cobbett, "was exhibited every trait of the cowardly Philadelphia malice. The hanging of Roberts and Carlisle did not excite more unequivocal expressions of triumph. The sovereign citizens took printers' ink and drew the picture of the devil on the door of the house; they even bit the presses with their teeth by way of revenge for what the poor innocent things had done. Methinks I hear the reader say, 'It is well *you*

were not there, Peter!' Not all all. I know the sovereign people of Philadelphia, I have wintered them and summered them, as the man said by his hogs, and I know them to be at once the most malicious and cowardly race in existence."

"Under any circumstances it would have been extremely mortifying to me to have my goods sold by the sheriff, but in *such* a case as this, it was no mortification at all, indeed I was pleased with it, as it furnished the sovereigns with a good opportunity of declaring themselves the partizans of Rush and the enemies of Peter Porcupine. The only thing on account of which I regretted the seizure and attachments, was the delay thereby occasioned in the discharge of some few demands against me in Philadelphia. I owed about 800 dollars when I came away, while the debts which I left to be collected amounted to 2500. By attaching the money, which my clerk should collect, the payment of the 800 dollars has been delayed, but my creditors require no assurance of the ultimate liquidation of their debts; they well know that I am no PENNSYLVANIAN."

Cobbett mentions a fact connected with the practice of Rush, which is a serious one, and one which must have deeply interested the feelings of every American, namely, the death of General Washington, which was attributed entirely to the depletion of blood and to mercurial purges, and, "thus," says Cobbett, "on the fatal 14th December, on the same day, in the same evening, nay in the very same hour that a Philadelphian court and jury were laying on me a ruinous fine for having reprobated the practice of Rush, GENERAL WASHINGTON was expiring while under the operation of that very practice. On that day, the victory of RUSH and DEATH was complete, but their triumph was but of short duration, for while I have continued on my course unchecked by the judgments, the seizures, the attachments of Rush, and the savage howlings of his 'dear fellow citizens,' General Washington has I hope, broken the chains of the grim tyrant death, and soared into the realms of immortal glory."

By way of a finale to the serio-comico-farcico-tragico

piece, that had been enacted by Rush and his puppets, Cobbett published the following *jeu d'esprit*, which he entitled :

PORCUPINE'S REVENGE.

A Dialogue between RUSH and PORCUPINE.

RUSH.

Master Peter you see, with my twelve sovereign men,
I have tipp'd you a squeeze for the strokes of your pen,
These twelve sovereign men, now I no longer need them,
How shall I reward ?

PETER.

Why bleed them, Rush, bleed them !

RUSH.

But to the judge on the bench, so just and humane,
(The worthy successor and tool of Mc'Kean.)
To my lawyers, who bellow'd so loudly against you,
To Hopkinson, Ingersol, Levi the Jew,
The half Quaker Lewis (who once was a carter,)
And your faithful counsel, the mob-courting Harper,
To my volunteer witnesses, grateful young Mease,
To the poor Dr. Coxo, and poor granny Dewees,
Who generously came, with no duty to urge them,
What return shall I make ?

PETER,

Why purge them, Rush, purge them !

Enter SANGRADO, with the RUSHLIGHT in his hand. He remains for about half an hour, in stupid, sullen silence, and then starting from his reverie, pours forth, in slow and melancholy accents, the following Soliloquy :

Unthinking doctor, wherefore did thy rage
Urge thee with Printers' prowess to engage ;
O why from puffing to the law retire !
Why for thyself construct the fun'ral fire ?
What though an Ingersol before thee stood,
With dangling brush, to paint thee fair and good,
A weeping Hopkinson, dear, tender creature,
Sobbing to wail the injuries of nature,
What though kind-hearted jurors press'd thee round,
And philanthropic judges too were found ;

What though the gentle, just, and gen'rous crowd
 The verdict sanction'd with applauses loud ;
 What though five thousand dollars were the prize
 Which in idea gratified Thine eyes ;
 Say ! could such lenitives relieve thy shame,
 Or reunite thee to thy shadow fame ?
 Could they kill Peter—whose vindictive art
 So well directs his venom to thy heart ?
 Could they prevent exposure and disgrace,
 Or change the tincture of an Ethiop's face ?
 Oh ! no, they bade these hellish fires arise,
 And bind thee to the stake. (*He dies.*)

Strong and philosophical as might have been the mind of Cobbett, tough and stubborn as the oak of his native land, yet the issue of the prosecution of Rush visibly affected him for a time. To the five thousand dollars must be added the costs of suit, the loss incurred by the interruption in collecting debts in Pennsylvania, and by the sacrifice of property taken in execution, and sold by the sheriff at public auction in Philadelphia, where a great number of books in sheets, amongst which was a part of the new edition of Porcupine's works, were sold, or rather given away as waste paper ; so that the total of what was, and could be wrested from him by Rush, would fall little short of eight thousand dollars.

"To say," says Cobbett, "that I do not feel this stroke, and very sensibly too, would be great affectation, but to repine at it would be folly, and to sink under it cowardice. I knew an Englishman in the royal province of New Brunswick, who had a very valuable house, which was, I believe, at that time nearly his all, burnt to the ground. He was out of town when the fire broke out, and happened to come home just after it had exhausted itself. Every body knowing how hard he had earned the property, expected to see him bitterly bewail its loss. He came very leisurely up to the spot, stood about five minutes looking steadily at the rubbish, and then stripping off his coat. '*Here goes,*' said he, '*to earn another,*' and immediately went to work, raking the spikes and bits of iron out of the ashes. This noble-spirited man

I have the honour to call my friend, and if ever this page should meet his eye, he will have the satisfaction to see, that though it may not be possible for me to follow, I at least remember his example.

"In the future exertions of my industry, however, pecuniary emoluments will be, as it always has been with me, a secondary consideration. Recent incidents, amongst which I reckon the unprecedented proceedings against me at Philadelphia, have imposed on me the discharge of a duty, which I owe to my own country, as well as this, and the sooner I begin, the sooner I shall have done."

In pursuance of this determination, Cobbett commenced the publication of the "RUSHLIGHT," which, according to his own words, "as it is intended to assist the public view, in the inspecting of various tenebrious objects, will be called, and not I presume improperly a LIGHT, and as the appearance of this light must be attributed wholly to the Philadelphian phlebotomist, gratitude will sanction the propriety of prefixing to it the name of Rush. Thus, while the great literary luminaries of this enlightened nation emit their effulgence through the vehicles, which they most significantly term The Aurora, The Star, The Constellation, The Comet, and The Sun, I am content that my glimmering efforts should steal forth under the appellation of the

RUSHLIGHT.

"I must, nevertheless, do myself the justice to assure the public, that with the Rushlight in his hand, any one, (if the poor soul be not stone blind) will be able to see a good many very pretty things, which, notwithstanding the splendour of the grand luminaries above mentioned, would, without the aid of my little taper, remain hidden from him all the days of his life."

Five numbers only of the Rushlight were published, when he began to find that America would no longer afford a secure or comfortable asylum for an individual, whom all parties seemed determined to persecute and hunt out of their domain.

nions. It was too evident to him that the legal proceedings which were instituted against him in Philadelphia, although nominally for an injury done to the character of a professional man, was yet virtually the work of a faction, who were determined, *coute qui coute*, to make the soil of America too hot for him. The line of politics which Cobbett had adopted, was by no means agreeable to the majority of the American people, and he, therefore, raised up against himself a host of enemies, by his outrageous attacks and violent abuse of several of the most distinguished personages, who had taken a leading part in establishing the independence of the American colonies. Royalty at that time in America was at a discount, nor could all the bold and energetic writings of Cobbett bring it up even to near par. His sketches of Paine, Franklin, Rush, and his interminable abuse of Priestley, were too pungent and caustic not grossly to offend the admirers of those personages; and, therefore, no wonder need be excited that they all secretly combined to rid themselves of a man, whose principles and writings were so directly contrary to those, which they considered as most conducive to the interests of their young and thriving states.

Such being the gloomy aspect of affairs in America as far as regarded his own personal interests, he determined to leave America, and accordingly sailed with his family from New York on the 1st June 1800. Fearing, however, that his departure might be attributed to pusillanimity, or that his enemies might suppose that they had driven him from the shores of America, to deprive them of such a triumphant boast, he inserted a farewell address in the Philadelphia papers, of which the following is an extract:—

“You will doubtless be astonished, that after having had such a smack of the sweets of liberty, I should think of rising thus abruptly from the feast, but this astonishment will cease, when you consider that under a general term, things diametrically opposite in their natures are frequently included, and that flavours are not more various than tastes. Thus for instance, nourishment of every species is called *food*, and we

all like food, but while one is partial to roast beef and plum pudding, another is distractedly fond of flummery and mush; so it is with respect to liberty, of which, out of its infinite variety of sorts, yours unfortunately happens to be the sort which I do not like.

“When people care not two straws for each other, ceremony at parting is mere grimace; and as I have long felt the most perfect indifference with regard to a vast majority of those whom I now address, I shall spare myself the trouble of a ceremonious farewell. Let me, however, depart from you with indiscriminating contempt. If no man ever had so many and such malignant foes, no one ever had more friends, and those more kind, more sincere, and more faithful. If I have been unjustly vilified by some, others have extolled me far beyond my merits; if the savages of the city have scared my children in their cradle, those children have for their father’s sake, been soothed and caressed by the affectionate, the gentle, the generous inhabitants of the country, under whose hospitable roofs I have spent some of the nappiest hours of my life.

“*Thus* and *thus*, Americans, will I ever speak of you. In a very little time I shall be beyond the reach of your friendship or your malice; beyond the hearing of your commendations, or your curses, but being out of your power, will alter neither my sentiments nor my words. As I have never spoken any thing but truth to you, so I will never speak any thing but truth of you; the heart of a Briton revolts at an emulation in baseness, and although you have as a nation, treated me most ungratefully and unjustly, I scorn to repay you with ingratitude and injustice.

“To my friends, who are also the real friends of America, I wish that peace and happiness, which virtue ought to ensure, but which I greatly fear they will not find; and as to my enemies, I can wish them no severer scourge, than that which they are preparing for themselves and their country. With this I depart for my native land, where neither the moth, nor the rust of federalism doth corrupt, ar

where thieves do not with impunity break through and steal five thousand dollars at a time."

These were the last words published by Cobbett in America, we must, however, be allowed rather to anticipate the course of events, in order to mention some circumstances which took place during the latter part of his residence in America, and one in particular, which reflects great credit upon the spirit and loyalty of the British gentlemen, resident in Canada and the United States.

It appears that shortly after the return of Cobbett to England, he established a newspaper under the title of the Porcupine, in the prospectus of which, he states, "Having in America witnessed the fatal effects of revolution, having seen piety give place to a contempt of religion, plain dealing exchanged for shuffling and fraud; universal confidence for universal suspicion and distrust; having seen a country, once the seat of peace and good neighbourhood, torn to pieces by faction; plunged by intriguing demagogues into never-ceasing hatred and strife; having seen a people, once too fond of what they call liberty, to bear the gentle sway of a British king, humbly bend their necks to the yoke, nay, to the very feet of a set of grovelling despots; having in short seen the crime of rebellion against monarchy, punished by the tormenting, the degrading curse of republicanism, it is with the utmost astonishment and indignation, that I find many of those who have the press at their command, endeavouring to bring down on my native country, the very same species of calamity and disgrace. Notwithstanding the example of America, and the more dreadful example of France, I find the emissaries of the republican faction still preaching fanaticism and infidelity, still bawling for that change which they have the audacity to call REFORM, still exerting all their nefarious ingenuity in sapping the foundation of the church and throne. Those who want experience of the consequences, may, for aught I know, be excused for conniving at these attempts, but for me, who have seen acts passed by a republican legislature, more fraudulent than forgery or coining; for me,

who have seen republican officers of state offering their country for sale for a few thousand dollars; for me, who have seen republican judges become felons, and felons become republican judges; for me to fold my hands and tamely listen to the insolent eulogists of republican governments and rulers, would be a shameful abandonment of principle, a dastardly desertion of duty."

In dilating upon the principles on which his paper was to be conducted, Cobbett thus speaks of the French: "The intrigues of the French, the servile, the insidious, the insinuating French, shall be an object of my constant attention. Whether at war or at peace with us, they shall dread the power, envy the happiness, and thirst for the ruin of England. Collectively and individually, the whole and every one of them hate us. Had they the means, they would exterminate us to the last man; they would snatch the crutch from our parents, the cradle from our children, and our happy country itself, would they sink beneath those waves, on which they now flee from the thunder of our cannon. When we shall sheath the sword, it is for our sovereign to say, but while we retain one drop of true British blood in our veins, we *never* shall shake hands with this perfidious and sanguinary race, much less shall we make a compromise with their monkey-like manners, and tiger-like principles."

The sectarians will not thank Mr. Cobbett for the following *exposé* of his enmity towards them, and of the opinion which he held of their designs on the established religion of the country. We are particularly disposed to give the early opinions of Mr. Cobbett on these subjects, as we shall have occasion to contrast them with those sentiments, which he held on the same matters at a later period of his life, and a change in which did not always arise from a conviction of the falsity of the principles, but were in some instances to be attributed to personal animosities, and to retaliation for some supposed injury which he had received.

Thus Mr. Cobbett expresses himself: "The unperverted sense of the people is so decidedly in favour of the established

order of things, that the contrivers of innovations are never formidable, except where their real views are unperceived. It is their hypocritical cant, their clandestine intrigues in the numerous societies and institutions into which they imperceptibly worm themselves ; it is their visor and not their visage that we have to fear. It is with no small mortification that I find too many of the periodical publications, in the hands of fanatics and infidels, all of whom, however numerous their mongrel sects, however opposite their tenets, however hateful their persons to each other, do most cordially unite in their enmity to the national establishment, and most zealously co-operate for their destruction. Convinced as I am from the experience of America, as well as from history in general, that an established church is absolutely necessary to the existence of religion and morality, convinced also that the Church of England, while she is an *ornament*, an *honour*, and a *blessing* to the nation, is the principal pillar of the throne, I trust I shall never be base enough to decline a combat with her enemies, whether *they* approach me in the *lank locks of the sectary*, or the *scald crop of the Jacobin*."

Mr. Cobbett entered the arena of politics in England decidedly as a party man. With his rooted hatred to France and all that was French, he determined to give the fulness of his support to Mr. Pitt, the war-loving minister of a war-loving king, whose existence the people of this country have good reason to look upon, as one of the greatest curses that ever befel it. Cobbett was a decided supporter of the war, and with the foolish expectation of crushing the growing power of France, then under the government of the most extraordinary man of antient or modern times, he wilfully shut his eyes to the ruin which Mr. Pitt was daily and hourly bringing upon the country, by his insatuated continuation of a war in which he was receiving nothing but discomfiture and disgrace. Italy and Austria were gradually yielding to the triumphant armies of Buonaparte, and whilst Massena was making himself master of the former, Buonaparte him-

self, by the issue of the battle of Marengo, decided the fate of the latter. Nevertheless, it is but just that we should give Mr. Cobbett's reasons for the support which he gave to Mr. Pitt, but which he was in a short time induced to withdraw, not from any conviction that had suddenly flashed upon his mind, that the "heaven born minister" was bringing destruction upon the country, but merely that the proud and haughty aristocrat had refused any intimate personal communication with a man, who could trace his genealogy no higher than as being the grandson of poor and illiterate people, and himself the son of an obscure and petty farmer.

Speaking of the principles of his paper, Cobbett says: "It is incumbent upon me to say, that those principles will always be my own, for though I utterly reject that insolent maxim of disaffection, which will allow of reward to no talents, but such as are employed in the cause of rebellion, though I hold it to be the duty of men of power to employ the pen, as well as the sword, in defence of the government committed to their charge, yet the peculiar circumstances under which I am now come forward, demand from me a solemn and explicit assertion of my *independence*. My undertaking is my own. It was begun without the aid, without the advice, and even without the knowledge of any person, either directly or indirectly connected with the ministry. If, therefore, I hope to yield some trifling support to that ministry, it is not because I have received, or ever shall receive any gratification at their hands, but because I am *most sincerely persuaded*, that next to the *virtues* (?) of his majesty, and the general loyalty of his subjects, this country owes its preservation to the *wisdom* and *integrity* of Mr. Pitt and his colleagues! The PORCUPINE never was, in America, nor shall it ever be in England, the *blind instrument of party*, the trumpet of indiscriminate applause. The wisest men may sometimes commit error, which the most ignorant may perceive, I shall, therefore, feel no restraint, but that of decency and candour, trusting to a liberal interpretation of my motives from the wise, and totally disregarding the displea-

sure of those who may be weak enough to prefer flattery to truth.

"The subjects of a British king, like the sons of every provident and tender father, never know his value till they feel the want of his protection. In the days of youth and of ignorance, I was led to believe that comfort, freedom, and virtue, were exclusively the lot of republicans. A very short trial convinced me of my error, admonished me to repent of my folly, and urged me to compensate for the injustice of the opinions which I had conceived. During an eight years absence from my country, I was not an unconcerned spectator of her perils, nor did I listen in silence to the slander of her enemies; though divided from England by the ocean, though her gay fields were hidden, probably for ever from my view, still her happiness and her glory were the object of my constant solicitude. I rejoiced at her victories, and mourned at her defeats; her friends were my friends; her foes were my foes. Once more returned, once more under the safeguard of that sovereign, *who watched over us in my infancy(?)* and the want of whose protecting arm, I so long have had reason to lament, I feel an irresistible desire to communicate to my countrymen, the fruit of my experience; to show them the injurious and degrading consequences of discontent, disloyalty, and innovation, to convince them that they are the freest, as well as happiest of the human race, and above all, to warn them against the arts of those ambitious and perfidious demagogues, who would willingly reduce them to a level with the cheated slaves, in the bearing of whose yoke I have had the mortification to share."

In the management of his paper, Cobbett determined not to avail himself of one source of profit, which was the advertisements of *quack* medicines. "Not a single *quack* advertisement will on any account be admitted into the Porcupine. Our newspapers have been too long disgraced by this species of falsehood, filth, and obscenity. I am told, that by adhering to this resolution, I shall lose five hundred a year, and excite the resentment of the numerous body of empirics,

but their money I hope I shall never be so graceless as to covet, and as to their resentment, I have nothing to fear from that, so long as I abstain from their death-dealing nostrums."

It is by no means to be wondered at, that Cobbett entertained a decided aversion to *quacks*, and all that belonged to them. He had paid dearly in America for calling a man a *quack*, and it was, therefore, very natural to suppose, that he could not entertain any very great desire to renew his acquaintance with the fraternity, on his return to England.

One of the first effects experienced by Mr. Cobbett on the issuing of his prospectus, was the indignation expressed by several Americans residing in London, respecting the manner in which he alludes to their country; one of whom wrote to him the following letter:—

MR. PORCUPINE.

I was a subscriber to your paper in America, which I always read with much pleasure, because I thought you were what you professed to be, a real friend to our admired and unrivalled federal constitution, but I cannot say that I am inclined to give you the same sort of support here; because, if I am to judge from your prospectus, you mean to visit on my countrymen in general, the grudge which you certainly ought to confine to a very few of them. That you rendered great services to my country, I with gratitude allow, nor will I deny that you met with an ungrateful return. But you know well, sir, that the iniquitous proceedings against you, were the work of a faction, and not of the people of America, and I leave it to that sense of justice, which I always thought you to entertain, whether your revenge ought to extend to the whole nation.

AN AMERICAN.

In Cobbett's reply to this letter, he transcribes a part of his farewell address to the Americans, which has been already given in this work, and he then proceeds to say: "These, sir, were the last words I published in America. From the

determination which I then expressed, I am resolved never to depart. Never will I knowingly and seriously utter an assertion, or an insinuation respecting America, the truth of which I cannot establish. My prospectus contains no *indiscriminate charge* against your *countrymen*, and as to the facts to which you suppose me to allude, you know, if you have really read my American paper, that every one of them can be proved, nay, more, you know that they have all been stated over and over again in the newspapers of your own country.

"I repeat my assertion, that I have as many friends in America as you have, however extensive your connexions, or exalted your rank. Nay, I hope I have more and better friends in America, than any man in the world has. And as to the vile transactions, on account of which you imagine, I entertain 'a grudge,' it has produced a precisely opposite effect. In less than a month after the monstrous sum of 5000 dollars was so unjustly assessed, your countrymen would have paid it every farthing, and I certainly should have accepted of it at their hands, had the payment not been already voluntarily provided for by British gentlemen in Canada and the United States; judge then, if I can harbour any revenge against the people of America in general.

"But, sir, while I entertain, as I ever shall, the sincerest regard for my friends in America, while I respect very many public men in that country, and while the people considered in a mass, have my best wishes for their prosperity and happiness, they cannot be so unreasonable as to suppose, that I am bound to smother the multitude of useful truths, of which I am in possession. Yet, I might do even this, were the *good effects*, as they are called, of republicanism, not made use of to inveigle Britons across the Atlantic, but for the more nefarious purpose of exciting rebellion and revolution in this kingdom. So long as this continues to be the practice of the enemies of my king and country, so long shall I appeal to the example of America; and all that you or your country have a right to demand of me is, that I shall confine myself to the truth.

He had himself just started a newspaper, and yet in the very second number of that paper, he attributes the riotous proceedings, which had taken place in several parts of England, to the existence of newspapers in the country. On this subject, Mr. Cobbett says, "On the present high price of provisions, almost every newspaper has a set of maxims and opinions peculiar to itself. To these numerous and contradictory creeds, and to the obstinacy and virulence, with which they are severally supported, are to be attributed the distracted state of the public mind, and also much of the discontent and violence, which have disgraced the metropolis, as well as several parts of the country. *Had there been no such thing as a newspaper in England*; had the people been left to the guidance of their own good sense, to the dictates of their own experience, to the result of their own observations and reflections, instead of being teased and goaded with the hair-brained theories and irritating invectives of philanthropists and demagogues, we should have heard nothing of riots, nor of inflammatory resolutions

"Widely, however, as the opinions of the newspapers differed in themselves, there is a wonderful coincidence in their tendency, which is to arm the poor against the rich, to excite a general clamour against the continuation of the war, to produce national despondency, and thus prepare the minds of the people for disgrace and subjugation; that there is no ground for such discontent and despondency must be evident to every man who is capable of judging of the situation of the country. As to the *non-consumption* associations, they are the most ridiculous institutions which were ever engendered in a human brain. A few days ago, the non-consumption sages of the parish of St. James did me the honour to send me a printed copy of their resolutions, respecting the high price of provisions. By these resolutions, I was requested to prohibit the use of milk in my family, because the milk-people threatened to advance the price from *three pence half-penny* to four pence, and this prohibition I was told would tend to do good to the *industrious poor*. I was very much disposed to

assist the industrious poor, but of all the poor people in the parish, I knew no one more industrious than my poor milk-woman, who served me very punctually, and who probably derived from my custom a penny a day towards the maintenance of her children. I remembered, too, the observation of a milk-man in Philadelphia, who being told of a non-consumption association, resembling that of the parish of St. James, replied, 'Well! if you will not let me raise my price, the pump must assist me to raise my pail.' Besides, when I considered that the milk-woman intended to demand from me only *four pence* a quart, and that I always paid *six pence* a quart in America, in the land, according to Tom Paine, flowing with milk and honey, I could find no room for discontent, no reason for laying on a prohibition that would tend to drive the cows from the vicinity of the capital, and deprive my poor milk-woman of the means of subsistence; and that would inevitably spoil the breakfast; if not the health of my children. The gentlemen who sent me their resolutions, informed me of their intentions to publish them in the papers, which I believe they have done, they will therefore think it perfectly proper, that I should give equal publicity to my observations thereon. They will excuse me too, I trust, for giving my opinion, that every attempt; whether by bodies of men or individuals, to induce persons to part with their property at a lower price than that property will bring, is an act of injustice and of tyranny."

Pauperism, according to Cobbett, was now increasing fast in the country on account of the scarcity of provisions; and he began to wield his energetic pen in devising means for arresting its progress, if not for its abolition altogether. The following remarks are too valuable to be omitted:

"Time was," he says, "when the inhabitants of this island, for instance, laid claim to all things in it, without the words *owner* or *property* being known. God had given to *all* the people all the land, and all the trees, and every thing else, just as he has given the burrows and the grass to the rabbits, and the bushes and berries to the birds, and each had

the good things of this world, in a greater or less degree in proportion to his skill, his strength, and his valour. This is what is called living under *the law of nature*, that is to say, the law of self-preservation, and self-enjoyment, without any restraint being imposed by a regard for the good of our neighbours.

"In process of time, no matter from what cause, men made amongst themselves a compact, or an agreement, to divide the land and its products in such manner that each should have a share to his own exclusive use, and that each man should be protected in the exclusive enjoyment of his share by the *united powers of the rest*; and in order to ensure the due and certain application of this united power, the whole of the people agreed to be bound by regulations called *LAWS*. Thus arose civil society, thus arose property, thus arose the words *meum et tuum*, *mine and thine*. One man became possessed of more good things than another, because he was more industrious, more skilful, more careful, or more frugal, so that *labour*, of one sort or another, was the *basis* of all property.

"In what manner civil societies proceeded in providing for the making of laws, and for the enforcing of them; the various ways in which they took measures to protect the weak against the strong; how they have gone on to secure wealth against the attacks of poverty; these are subjects that it would require volumes to detail; but these truths are written on the heart of man, that all men are by nature equal; that civil society never can have arisen from any motive other than that of *the benefit of the whole*; that whenever civil society makes the greater part of the people *worse off* than they were under the laws of nature, the civil compact is, in conscience, dissolved, and all the rights of nature return; that in civil society, the rights and duties go hand in hand, and that, where the former are taken away, the latter cease to exist.

"Now then, in order to act well our part, as citizens or members of the community, we ought clearly to understand

what our rights are, for on the enjoyment of these depend our duties; rights going before duties, as value received goes before payment. I know well that just the contrary is taught in our political schools, where we are told, that our duty is to obey the laws; and it is not many years ago that Horsley, bishop of Rochester, told us that the people had nothing to do with the laws, but to obey them. The truth is, however, that the citizen's first duty is to maintain his rights, as it is the purchaser's first duty to receive the thing for which he has contracted.

"Our rights in society are numerous; the right of enjoying life and property; the right of exerting our mental and physical powers in an innocent manner; but the great right of all, and without which, there is in fact no right, *is the right of taking part in the making of the laws by which we are governed.* This right is founded on that law of nature already spoken of; it springs out of the very principle of civil society, for what compact, what agreement, what common assent, can possibly be imagined, by which men would give up all the rights of nature, all the free enjoyment of their bodies and their minds, in order to subject themselves to rules and laws, in the making of which they should have nothing to say, and which should be enforced upon them without their assent. The great right, therefore, of every man, the right of rights, is the right of having a share in the making of the laws, to which the good of the whole makes it his duty to submit.

"But the paupers? Ought they to share in making of the laws? and why not? What is a pauper? What is one of the men to whom the degrading appellation is applied, *a very poor man*; a man, who is from some cause or other, unable to supply himself with food and raiment without aid from the parish rates. And is that circumstance alone to deprive him of his right; a right, which he stands more in need of than any other man? Perhaps he has for many years of his life contributed directly to those rates, and ten thousand to one he has

by his labours contributed to them indirectly. The aid, which under such circumstances, he receives, *is his right*, he receives it not as an alms; he is no mendicant, he begs not: he comes to receive that which the law of the country awards him, in lieu of the larger portion assigned him by the law of nature."

We shall have occasion to recur to this subject, when we come to treat of the exertions which Mr. Cobbett made in the establishment of universal suffrage, the principles of which are clearly discernible in the foregoing quotation, although at that particular period of his life he was by his gigantic powers of mind, assisting the administration of the country, with Pitt at its head, in bringing about the ruin of the nation.

Although Cobbett was now safely domiciliated in his native country, he does not appear to have lost all remembrance of his American friends, for ever and anon we are treated in his newspaper with some laughable incidents transmitted to him from the other side of the Atlantic, relative to those characters, with whom he had been in active association, and who had contributed in no small degree to bring about his departure from America. Thus in regard to the Bradfords, we find in one of his Porcupines, the following laughable account of some of their proceedings, and for the truth of which Cobbett gives his authority.

"GREAT NEWS! GREAT NEWS!! A curious affair has lately happened at Philadelphia, which, for the honour of the bookselling and news-printing trades, we must relate: 'A bookseller of the name of Bradford, who also published a newspaper, married his son about two years ago, to a very decent young woman, and gave him as a fortune, the proprietorship of the newspaper. Having, however, obtained a dower with the girl, by way of equivalent, he kept the newspaper in his hands, but his son, whether from a sense of justice or a love of money, conceived the project of cheating the poor old man into a fulfilment of the marriage contract. He provided a large house, and one day, when he thought hi

father was out of town, began to dismantle the printing office of its filthy and mischievous apparatus. The old man came home in the midst of the bustle, and after some expostulation, assaulted the son, who returned the compliment with such severity, that his father was soon extended apparently lifeless on the floor. The son, shocked at having committed an act of parricide, ran home to his house, where not finding his wife in the way, he ran to a cupboard, seized a bottle of laudanum, and having swallowed a copious dose, wrote a billet to his wife, telling her that *he was no more*. After taking time to reflect however, he sent for medical assistance, which was fortunately administered in time, but the billet which he had sent to his wife, having reached the father's ears, the old man in his turn resolved to put an end to his existence with the assistance of a halter. Unfortunately for the cause of justice, he chose the printing office for the scene of execution, where he was so long saying his prayers, and preparing the noose, that he gave the son time to recover and to return to the occupation, which had been the cause of the quarrel. Seeing his dead child enter in his shirt sleeves, and looking very pale, he at first thought it was his ghost, but he was very soon undeceived by the weight of the same filial fist, which had before deprived him of his senses. The battle was renewed with redoubled fury, till the neighbours thinking probably that it was a pity to suffer the combatants to cheat the gallows of its due, interfered, and put an end to the tragic comedy, which has served the Philadelphians as a sort of episode in that grand drama of rascality, which had there been exhibited to their view during six months past."

One of the most extraordinary productions of Cobbett's pen, which he put forth at this time, was an article founded on an advertisement which appeared, accompanied by a copperplate engraving, by which any lady or gentleman would be enabled TO TAKE AN ACCURATE MEASURE OF THEIR OWN HEAD. The article itself is exceedingly scarce, but we have been kindly favoured with a copy of it, and the perusal of it will well repay the time that is bestowed upon it.

A MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY INTERESTING TO ALL
CLASSES OF HIS MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS.

"An artist, who will hereafter stand high in the estimation of the people of England, and indeed of the whole world, has invented a machine by which any lady or gentleman can, without the aid of either friend or servant, *take an accurate measure of their own head.*

"The value of this discovery will at once appear to those, who are conversant with the history of mankind at large, but more particularly with the history of literature and literary undertakings, of all which it may be said, that their success or failure has depended entirely on the *measure of the head* having been taken or neglected. Whatever errors have been committed by statesmen or authors, the two great instructors of mankind, and supreme conductors of human affairs, are universally acknowledged to have proceeded from this one want, the want of an accurate measure of the heads that project or execute. It is this lamentable defect, or oversight, for I wish to use the gentlest terms in speaking of the faults of my fellow creatures, that has bewildered so many thousands in exertions beyond their powers, and in endeavours to execute that for which nature never designed them. It is this, which occasions the melancholy reflection that many thousands consume almost the whole of their lives in experiments, to find out what they are fit for; and when they have made the discovery, it is not until their powers and faculties are wasted with age, and incapable of lending them any assistance. To this it is owing that many a man dies with the name of a lawyer, who ought to have lived in the profession of a wit; and that many others have been buried with ecclesiastical honours, who might have grown rich in the occupation of a farmer. It is this which intercepts one man in his way to the bench, and another to the diocese, which prevents the physician from attaining his chariot, and sends the politician to a jail, when he was preparing for a privy council.

"If Dr. Priestley, for instance, had taken a proper measure

of his head, would he have emigrated to America, would he have been constrained to touch our hearts with the following doleful ditty :—

"I, wretched wight, have left my native plains,
The smoky workshops, and the swarthy swains,
Where joining chemic with religious hate,
I tried to decompose the church and state,
Spurning the bounds to different studies fix'd,
Poison with preaching fearlessly I mix'd.
Ah ! unhappy me ! whither shall I flee,
Who'll give asylum to a wretch like me ?
Shall I on Susquehanna's banks remain ?
Or seek, repentant, Britain's shores again ?
Haply I may, when long revolving years
Complete an age of penitence and tears,
Hope to approach once more her sea-girt bound,
Kiss her white cliffs, and clasp her sacred ground.
Admire the cottager's unenvied thatch,
The well-glaz'd lattice, and th'unfastened latch.
Oh ! shall the barb'rous Gaul such fields invade,
For such the spoils are our barveats made ?
Go, go, my books—edition's darling boat,
No more my pen shall aid the murderous host.

How different would have been the case with the doctor, and authors and statesmen in general, had they in early life obtained one of our artist's machines for measuring the head. It is truly deplorable to think of such a number of our fellow beings, who live till advanced age, before they know the size and capacity of their heads ; what they can comprehend, and whether they have depth to contain the articles necessary to crown their favourite pursuits and wishes. For though their knowledge may, in some cases, be acquired by experience, yet experience, to answer the purpose effectually, must be very long, and, as some gentlemen have found, very expensive. Few articles have of late years risen so highly in price as this, and it is not very easy to account for it. That there is an immense quantity of experience in the market, cannot be reasonably doubted, but the mischief seems to be, that every one

prefers an article of his own manufacture, however dear, to one made by another, which he may purchase a thousand per cent. under the prime cost.

"The discovery, however, of a *machine* to measure the head, being now effected, it is hoped it will meet with the encouragement, which it deserves; and while I disclaim all connexion with the ingenious inventor, I am most disinterestedly anxious to recommend to all ranks of people a contrivance, which all ranks seem to want.

"At the approaching crisis, for example, when hundreds of well-meaning gentlemen will be scampering over all parts of the United Kingdom, canvassing for a seat in the great assembly of the nation, and fancying, merely in conjecture, that they are qualified for it, would it not be a considerable saving for some of them, I mean in the article of disappointment, if they were first to measure their heads upon accurate principles, and ascertain whether they come up to the exact dimensions of the *caput* of a wise and loyal legislator? Surely this would prevent some trouble and mortification to themselves, and a great deal of both to their friends; and it may be fairly supposed, might contribute also to the welfare of the nation, by providing it with a set of senators, whom nature had qualified to an inch for the important office, and whose heads were of somewhat more use, than merely to nod, or bear a wig. Why is it that we have heard of some of them, who have gone beyond their depth, but because they did not know their depth? And why do we hear the terms 'shallow' and 'superficial' so often applied, and justly applied, when the imputation might have been averted, by the little machine for taking the heights and distances of heads, engraved for their use on a copper-plate, and to be had *gratis*?

"The mention of senators, which the present circumstances have naturally suggested, connects with it the case of other deliberative assemblies, where certain persons are apt to step forward, in situations for which they are miserably ill provided, both as to length and depth of headwork, and

of which, however, they rarely become sensible, without trying that very awkward experiment, which we call *exposing themselves*. This is in fact, exposing their heads, which are, upon such occasions, measured by their neighbours, and the superficial contents in general, found to be far short of the proper standard, and this will always be the case, if we bring our heads into business by computation, instead of actual measurement. In such societies, however, were they under proper regulations, which I hope they soon will be, a set of officers might be appointed, and called MEASURERS or, as fine words are more acceptable, *Dimensionists*, whose business should be to apply the rules of geometry according to the machine above specified, to the head of every man about to make a motion, or speech, or to reply to the motion, or speech of any other person. A suitable standard might be appointed by a committee of geometers, by which every head should be appreciated; for although we cannot make all heads equal, yet, in a debate, it is very necessary to make a selection of such as bear some reasonable proportion to each other, or at least to exclude those, which are greatly deficient in length and depth. The prolixity of debates would be considerably obviated by this method; and in a world of business like ours, I cannot but think this an object of serious moment; and, consequently, cannot but flatter myself, that the hints I am throwing out, will not be neglected; and that the ingenious contriver of the *Kephalometer*, or Head Measurer, will find a great demand for the article, on the eve of all elections, counsels, and vestries, and more especially on the great festivals of St. Michael and St. Thomas.*

“If we look to the present state of the learned professions, we shall see at a single glance the necessity of this machine for measuring heads. It will not, I grant, do much good to

* If the Kephalometer had been applied to the head of Alderman Winchester, would the Livery of London have elected him as their mayor? If the Kephalometer were to be applied to the head of the Duke of Cumberland what would be the result? perhaps, he would not have a head in a short time to be measured at all.

the present generation, where heads, although we were to measure them with the greatest accuracy, have long ago taken a wrong direction, and cannot now be turned into any more useful purposes. But it may amongst the rising generation, prevent that confusion, which is so frequently observed to proceed from young men rushing into one profession, when their heads were manifestly constructed for another. It is owing to this neglect of the dimensions of the head, that, to use the language of a learned writer, many men expose themselves in the pulpit, who would have done honour to their country by following the plough; and it is no doubt owing to the same cause, that when we look into the inns of court for chancellors and judges, for Hardwickes and Mansfields, we meet with the writers of farces and epilogues, and players on flutes and violins; and that when in other departments, we look for men of family and fortune, we so frequently encounter stable boys and jockies. Anomalies like these never could have taken place, had the Kephalometer been early applied, and the party had calmly sat down to be measured for a suitable employment in life.

“It is true indeed that some have contrived by a fortunate concurrence of circumstances to turn their heads to a proper object, while apparently they have retained their first and ill-judged choice. I am acquainted with a barrister, who, although his name be little known in Westminster hall, is well known every where else as a man more capable of training a horse or a spaniel, than any sportsman in the kingdom; and I have more than one gentleman by trade in my eye, who can kick up a riot, seduce a wife, fight a duel, defraud a creditor, more genteelly and expeditiously, than any professed rioter, seducer, bully or sharper in Newgate. But such fortunate coincidences are not often to be expected and the instances are too few to be depended on, of those, who contrive to have and to hold both what they are, and what they are not fit for.

“There is one trade of late become very numerous who particularly stand in need of the machine to measure

heads, I mean and with all due respect, the POETS in general. No race of men have suffered so much from gross numbers or loose contributions, or what I may call taking their heads for granted, and imagining that the manufacture of verses is the whole duty of man. They have by this fatal mistake mounted from a Vauxhall song to an epic poem, and thus deprived the world of several eminent handicraftmen, of some very industrious shopkeepers, and of sundry persons admirably qualified to carry on the lesser operations of the loom, the last, the hod, and the knot.

"As to politicians, in which class I may include myself, it has been a standing complaint in this country for above a century, that this trade has been so egregiously misunderstood as to be supposed to require no head at all, consequently wherever such a mistake prevailed, it was thought absurd to measure a head, which did not exist, or was not deemed necessary. But time and experience have in some degree removed this prejudice, and the charms of innocence have lost much of their fascination. I trust that all politicians behind counters, and in public or private houses, whether habited in woollen or in muslin, will hereafter take the depth and gauge of their heads by the Kephalometer. They will then probably discover, that cases and circumstances, which have puzzled the ablest and wisest of all ages, cannot be adjusted by those who are distinguished for the want of wisdom and ability; that a subject will not be the better discussed, for not being at all understood, and that they who have no means of information, are not quite so well qualified to judge, as those who have; that the affairs of a shop or a family may be more easily managed, than those of a nation or a cabinet: and that wisdom, which is the result of long experience, of combined knowledge, and of deep research, seldom comes by instinct. They will discover likewise, that a man is always most to the purpose on a subject with which he has some acquaintance, and that the common sources of information are not always to be relied on, since even the lie of the day, is seldom the lie of the morrow.

“But in truth, to what description of persons will not this machine be useful? Let us look at the protracted and almost endless writings of the controversialists. Had a machine for measuring heads been discovered about a century ago, would the Bangorian controversy have lasted so long? and I hope I may ask without offence, would not a vast saving of paper, print, temper, malice, envy, and all uncharitableness, and other useful articles have been made, had some of the writers in the Blagdon bickering, applied my ingenious artist’s machine to their own heads?

“Perhaps too, ladies are not wholly uninterested in the discovery, although the original artist had no eye but to their wigs. Might they not apply the machine to their lover’s heads, at the same time that they carry on the attack a little lower on their hearts. Many circumstances of public notoriety seem to prove, that deficiencies in the head are of very important mischief to the happiness of the matrimonial state; and although some husbands have proved themselves to be rogues, yet that roguery has been so mixed with a corresponding quality, that the best JUDGES have declared it extremely doubtful, whether they were most rogue or fool. And I believe it has been generally found, that in treating a helpless woman with barbarity, in abusing the tenderness of the sex, and tyrannising over wife and family, from whatever occasional causes such wickedness might proceed, there is generally a great defect of intellect, a depravity and vulgarity of mind, which could not have escaped the unhappy sufferer, had she at first *measured the head*.

“I cannot close this speculation without hinting in a few words, because such characters will not bear many, that even men of pleasure would find their advantage in measuring their heads before they joined in those convivialities, which constitute the only employment they seem to have on this earth. A number of disagreeable circumstances might be prevented, if they knew exactly by liquid measure, what their heads would contain, and many duels would no doubt be avoided, without lessening the importance of horses, strumpets,

and other articles, for which they think it necessary to risk their life, and which if there were not an hereafter, would really be an equivalent to the life that is risked."

When Cobbett wrote this, neither Spurzheim nor Gall had made their appearance in this country, to take the measure of the heads of the people, and triumph in the discovery which they had made, that there is no system so ridiculous, no theory so fanciful and imaginative, no plan so wild and untenable, which the people of this country cannot be brought to adopt, if it have but novelty and originality to recommend it.

CHAPTER VI.

AMONGST the various topics, which Cobbett principally enlarged upon, as the editor of the Porcupine, was the then scarcity which at that time began to prevail, and the effect which the corn laws had, not only in producing, but tending every day to augment it. Strenuously did he labour to convince the people, that the war had no share in producing the scarcity; on the contrary, that owing to the continual and excessive drains, which were made upon our population, the effect was in the reverse, for the country was not only drained of its male population, who were most likely to have entered into the married state, and thereby have increased the population, and with that increase have augmented the demand for all the necessaries of human life, but it was also the firm conviction of his mind, that the scarcity was to be attributed to the circulating medium, which was at once base and spurious, and scarcely available in foreign countries for the common purposes of commerce.

For the purpose of elucidating his principles, and giving them the air of pleasantry, as an inducement to the readers of his paper to bestow upon them a proper consideration, which he was aware could not always be obtained by a dry and elaborate essay, he sent forth the following entertaining sketch, which is truly worthy of his pen. He gives it as one of his pleasantries, under the title of Scepticus, addressed to the editor of the Porcupine, but the head and the mind of Cobbett are to be traced in every line of it.

"SIR,

"Having occasion to visit a friend a few miles out of town, I stept into one of those inviting vehicles called *short*"

stages, and soon found myself one of six agreeable companions, who resolved to shorten and sweeten their journey, by a familiar exchange of sentiments. The *scarcity* occurred to us, before we were off the stones. It is all owing, said a grave looking gentleman, it is all owing to the *war*, in which we are engaged. Nay, interrupted a young gentleman in a smart uniform, it *can't* be owing to the war; you have had wars before and no scarcity, and besides, *what should we have done without the war?* In my opinion, the *monopolisers* are at the bottom of the whole business. *Monopolisers!* quoth a third person in a drab coat, that is easier said than proved: where are the monopolisers to be found? No! no! it is all owing to the *millers*. The millers indeed! exclaimed a very pretty country looking woman, who seemed to be possessed of the *clack*; the millers indeed! I wonder people will allow their tongues such freedom, with large bodies of men; there always have been millers, and I should be glad to know besides, *what you would do without millers?* It is very clear, it is all owing to the great farmers. I don't know, madam, said the fifth person in our collection, why the great farmers are to be blamed; a man may surely be a great farmer, without being a great rogue; people are not to bring their corn in handfuls to market; there have always been great farmers: besides, *what would you do without great farmers?* For my part, I have no doubt, the root of the evil lies in Mark Lane; look at your corn-factors, said he, with an air of triumph, and looking at me, as if he expected my opinion. I said it might be so, *I was unacquainted with the subject*; where all parties are blamed, it is probable some deserve it. The military spark, recollecting himself, declared he would be d—d if the *bakers* had not a share in this business; but the bakers soon found an advocate in the pretty female, who pleaded the cause of the millers, and who exclaimed: The *bakers!* Lord help them! the worst used people on the face of the earth. When did you hear of a baker that was rich? Besides, *what would you do without bakers?*

“This gave me an opportunity to sum up the evidence, by observing that as we could not do without *war*, nor without *millers*, nor without *great farmers*, nor without *corn-factors*, nor without *bakers*, we had nothing left but to sit down quietly, and submit to our grievances, as notwithstanding so many persons are desirous of throwing the blame, it is impossible to make it stick anywhere, at least not exactly in those quarters which had been already mentioned. This seemed tolerably agreeable to all parties, (each reserving his own opinion to himself,) and peace was restored upon a tolerable footing, when an unlucky question, started by one of my companions, again split the coach into parties. This was no other than, ‘Was the scarcity *real* or *artificial*?’ The officer and the enemy to corn-factors maintained with great powers of vociferation, that the scarcity was artificial. They had travelled, they had beheld the harvest, they had seen things with their own eyes, they were convinced, and all the world should not make them think otherwise.

“On the other hand, the advocates for the *millers*, the *great farmers*, and the *bakers* maintained with equal strength of lungs, that the scarcity was *real*. They, too, had travelled, they had seen the harvest, they had seen things with their own eyes; they, too, were convinced, and all the world should not make them think otherwise. The latter party, however, trusted that I would not be silent on this question, for as there had been riots in London, undoubtedly I must know something of the matter, ‘and I perceive, sir,’ said the pretty lady, ‘I perceive, sir, by the buttons on your coat, that you belong to one of the *corps*, so you must know something.’

“I assured my hearers, that neither my situation in the corps, nor my residence in London, had qualified me to talk upon this subject; on the contrary I was afraid that these circumstances were against me, for I had not, like them travelled, beheld the harvest, nor seen things with my own eyes: that I had often heard the subject canvassed, as it has been to-day, in which assertion was placed against assertion

hearsay against hearsay, and eyesight against eyesight, but that I remained as ignorant as before of the question in dispute, and feared I should ever remain so.

"Now, Mr. Editor, it appears to me rather a hard case, that we cannot go into company without being obliged to listen to discussions, which arrive at no conclusion, where opinions are given in lieu of arguments, and mere assertions substituted for proofs; and of which discussions the only object seems to be, to prove how much a man can talk on a subject, which he does not understand. Prejudice, too, is a gainer on such occasions, and I am afraid much of what we call a social interchange of sentiments tends only to the confirmation on certain preconceived opinions.

"But to return to the causes of scarcity. Is not this way of tracing effects to causes, rather common in other cases? Ask what is the cause of the *scarcity* of morals, and you will be referred to the remissness of the *magistrates*. 'No,' says the magistrate, 'I am not remiss, but the *laws* are deficient; the legislature never knows how to strike at the root of an evil.' 'The *legislature*!' exclaims a member of parliament, 'what cant is all this? what can the legislature do? Is not our statute book already crowded with penalties? Is there a crime untouched? We may punish the guilty, but can we prevent their escape? Can we make men honest?

"Thus, I presume, the scarcity of bread will not be a matter of greater difficulty to understand, than the causes why ~~wars~~ wars are begun, and why not soon ended. But on this subject I am afraid to trust myself, lest I not only trespass on your time, but add one to that happy number who mistake *fancies* for facts, and are inclined to triumph as much when they make a bold accusation, as when they advance a striking proof."

To trace the character of Cobbett through all its windings, inconsistencies, and contradictions would be a task of no little difficulty. It is scarcely possible in the whole range of public characters to select one, who has veered so directly from op-

posite points as Cobbett. The editor of the Porcupine newspaper in 1800, and the editor of the Political Register in 1830, were, although one and the same person, as opposite in their political principles as a Pitt and a Fox, a Machiavel and a Wellington. In the exuberance of his ultra-loyalty, as the editor of the Porcupine, he flung about him his lash most severely on all those, who either by their writings or their speeches, attempted to throw the slightest aspersion upon the divine prerogative of kings. Amongst the influential men, who at that time took the lead in the deliberations of the common council of London, Mr. Waithman had for some time distinguished himself as one of the most strenuous and sturdy opponents, not only of the measures of government in general, but also of the influence of the crown, which had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished. The common council taking into their consideration the distresses of the country, had determined to address the king, petitioning him to assemble parliament for the purpose of taking into consideration the alarming state of the nation, and praying that some means might be devised to allay the ferment of the public mind, before it broke out into violent and rebellious excesses. The address was accordingly presented to his majesty, who returned the following abrupt and uncourteous answer:

"I am always desirous of recurring to the assistance and advice of my parliament in any public emergency, and previous to receiving your petition, I had given directions for convening parliament for the despatch of business."

This answer was considered by a great number of the common council, as little short of a direct insult, and accordingly on the 4th November, Mr. Waithman, on the motion being made that his majesty's *gracious* answer should be entered on the journals of the court, moved as an amendment, "At the same time this court are of an opinion, that whoever advised the answer received from his majesty, have proved themselves deficient in duty to his majesty, disrespectful to this court, and regardless of the extreme suffering

and distress of his majesty's subjects." This amendment was, however, negatived, and the wrath of Cobbett waxed sore against the proposer of it, and he expresses his most unfeigned delight that the *insulting* motion of Mr. Waithman was not adopted by the common council; and in the spirit of ultra-loyalty, and his abhorrence of everything tending to anything like dictation to so divine a personage as a king, he says: "Though *we* (that is I, the editor,) have not the honour of being livery *men* of the city of London, we have the much greater honour of being Englishmen. Though we would be the last to restrain the liberties of the city, we shall certainly be the very first to resist its encroachment on our liberties, and every attempt to assume a dictatorship in the affairs of the nation, we shall look upon as such an encroachment. In other countries (not to revert to the history of London itself,) we have seen the fatal effects of the all-devouring influence of great cities, where a handful of ambitious and worthless demagogues have frequently succeeded in usurping, little by little, all the powers of government, and in ruling the whole nation with a rod of iron. Had it not been for Paris, France never would have groaned under the inexorable tyranny of a Robespierre, or a Buonaparte." And we, as the author of the Memoirs of William Cobbett, may add, had it not been for London, England never would have groaned under the tyrannical and ruinous administration of tory aristocrats, nor would it have been degraded and disgraced by the libertinism and profligacy of a George the Fourth; the pages of its history would not have been blackened with the recital of a respectable female now enduring the wretchedness of a workhouse, on account of the ruin brought upon her father by the unprincipled conduct of a duke of York;* nor, finally, would its annals now have to

* We allude to the case of Miss Chapple, the daughter of a respectable Bookseller, formerly of Pall Mall, who, from a state of comparative affluence, is now reduced to the utmost indigence, by the non-payment of the money which the late illustrious duke of York owed her father,—of such stuff is royalty made.

record the history of another highly popular branch of the said illustrious family, secretly paving his way to the throne by the removal, *by some means*, of the only object which obstructs his passage.

The spleen of Cobbett, however, was not exhausted against the citizens of London, for their approximation, as he supposed, to republicanism, for he soon obtained a good opportunity of castigating the liverymen for their disloyalty and republican propensities, in having elected Alderman Coombe as lord mayor of London; and on this occasion he thus addresses the liverymen:

“GENTLEMEN,

“If you are not a mere mob, you must have some little desire to know in what light your public conduct is viewed by the rest of mankind. I therefore take the liberty to inform you, and your countrymen in general, that your last choice of a lord mayor, has procured you the honourable applauses of all the republicans, revolutionists, rebels, and regicides in America. That the authenticity of so agreeable an article of information may not be a matter of doubt with you, I here insert an extract from a democratic newspaper of New York, entitled *The American Citizen*, which extract I humbly recommend to be nailed up in letters of brass in some conspicuous part of your Guildhall.

“ ‘ New York, Friday, April 18, 1800.

“ ‘ We publish in our paper of this day an account of the proceedings at the election, (that of Coombe,) for lord mayor of the city of London. The London papers which we have received, and which contain an account of this transaction, are of an older date than several other accounts that have been received from Europe. We believe, however, that this transaction has not been published in any paper of the United States; it will, therefore, probably be highly gratifying to many of our readers, and to a still greater number it must be essentially interesting to know the political

sentiment that is prevalent in the capital of England. It is not the mere circumstance of the election of a corporation officer in a distant country, that can be of any consequence to the American citizen, but consequences drawn from certain facts, are frequently of vast importance in political calculation. It is in this point of view that we have reason to rejoice at the late election in the city of London. One of the candidates in this case was the known and decided *friend of monarchy*, the advocate of every measure of English administration, and his opinions harmonized with the general arrangements of the government. Another of the candidates possessed sentiments directly opposite. Alderman Coombe, who was elected to the mayoralty of the city of London, is reputed to be, and we believe with truth, a *firm republican* in his political sentiments. He has triumphed over all opposition, which shows almost to an unequivocal certainty, *that the capital of England is making progress in the diffusion of republican sentiments*; and that from this single circumstance, there is reason to believe that energy of mind in that country will rise superior to the political degradation into which its government has endeavoured to precipitate it. Should an event of this sort exhibit itself in England, it would strengthen in a high degree *republicanism throughout the world*, and become the guarantee of the best interests of liberty amongst the human race.'

"Now, Gentlemen, what think you of this compliment? The political sentiments of your eulogist are here fully displayed, and the inference to be drawn from his eulogy, is too evident to escape you. This man rejoices at the result of the election of Coombe, because the man whom you have rejected is, he says, a *decided friend of monarchy*, and because the one you have chosen, is a *firm republican*. Hence he very naturally concludes that the capital of England is making *progress in the diffusion of republican sentiments*, on which circumstance he founds a malignant hope, that the government of England will ere long be destroyed, and that

republicanism will be strengthened throughout the world, a hope in which I dare say, he is most heartily joined by the regicides of France.

"When men's political conduct is such as to merit the enthusiastic applause of every enemy of their king and country, it requires no comment. I shall, therefore, only add, that *I trust it will be very long* ere a reform in parliament will enable you and your numerous brother citizens to send forty Coombes at a time to occupy the benches of the House of Commons, for whenever that unfortunate day arrives, Britain will soon be, what Holland now is.

"I do not pretend to say or insinuate, that either you or Mr. Coombe are really what this malevolent republican believes you to be. I sincerely believe that a very great majority of you are perfectly well affected towards our king and constitution; but by the extract I have laid before you, you must clearly perceive, that your conduct has tended to create in the minds of foreigners a belief that you are not so, and this belief you may be assured cannot fail to encourage and embolden our enemies, and of course to prolong that war against which you are clamouring, or to sink our country in ruin and disgrace.

"The recent proceedings of the several bodies in the city have called forth this address, which, however, is more especially to be attributed to a very extraordinary motion brought forward by Mr. Waithman, and adopted by the common council.* The sentiments of that motion are too insulting to our sovereign and to his loyal subjects in general, to pass without animadversion.

"PETER PORCUPINE."

In regard to this letter to the livery of London, Peter was surprised at the manner in which it was received in the city, and he found himself egregiously mistaken, as to the great majority of the people of London being so very well affected

* Mr. Cobbett is here in an error, the motion of Mr. Waithman was negatived.

towards the king and his ministers, as he had flattered himself they were. If it were the opinion of Peter Porcupine, that Mr. Waithman and his party had intended an insult to his majesty, by the motion which was made, it was equally clear to the same party, that it was the intention of Peter to insult them, by the letter which he had addressed to the liverymen. So far, therefore, from Peter reaping any laurels from his attempt to stem the tide of republicanism in the city, and to force the stream of royalty to flow from the purlieus of St. James', through Temple Bar into the city, he found that he had drawn upon him a most copious flood of abuse and invective, and he was very uncereemoniously told by the *vo-disant* republicans of the city, that if Peter would attend to his own business, they were very well able to attend to theirs.

Having, however, settled the liverymen of London, according to his own opinion, Cobbett reverts to his favourite topic, the abuse of the French, and on that head, he considers that Charles the First, was one of the greatest monarchs who ever sat on the throne of England. He had married a French woman, Henrietta, daughter of Henry IV. of France, and the great dislike of Charles to the "Monseers," was, that they wanted to steal her back again. "Thus," says Cobbett, "wherever these intriguing and impertinent people get a footing, they thrust their noses into every thing; they interfere in every public dispute or quarrel; they side with the government against the people, or with the people against the government, as best suits their views. I do not confine myself to their conduct of the present day, I speak of it as a trait of their national character. There is not a state in Europe, but has been some time or other agitated, if not convulsed, by their intrigues or cabals, and their conspiracies.

"A singular anecdote respecting the troublesomeness of these meddling guests, is to be found in the history of the court of Charles I. of England. It is well known that his queen was a French woman, and when she came to England, she brought over with her a pretty considerable troop, male

and female, of her country people, but they behaved in a manner that soon induced the king to write the following letters to his prime minister, the Duke of Buckingham, which are taken from the originals in the British Museum.

STEENIE.

I writ you by Ned Clarke, that I thought I would have here cause enufe in shorte tyme to put away the Monseers, either from their attempting to steal away my wyfe, or making plots among my owen subjects, I cannot say certainlie, whether it was intended, but I am sure it is hindered. For other, though I have good grounds to belife it, and am still hunting after it, yet seeing daillie the malitiousness of the Monzeers, by making and fomenting discontents in my wyfe, I could tarrie no longer from adverticing you, that I mean to casier my Monseers, having for this purpose sent you this other letter that you may advertice the queen mother with my intention.

So I rest,

Your faithful, constant, loving Frende,
"C. R."

"The Duke, however, did not immediately comply with his royal master's request, but expostulated with him on the subject; but the conduct of the Monseers had got the better of the patience of the monarch, mild and placid as he was, and he wrote the Duke in the following peremptory style.

STEENIE.

I have received your letter by Dic Greme; this is my answer. I command you to send all the French away to-morrow out of towne, if you can by sayre means (but stike not long disputing) etherwase force them away like so many wyld beastes, until ye have shipped them, and *so the devil goe with them*. Lette me heare no answer but of the performance of my command.

So I rest,

Your constant Frende,

"C. R."

"And so say I," says Cobbett, "let the devil go with them. I would rather take a Jew into my house, than a Frenchman—if I be cheated or ruined by the former, it is my own fault, for I ought to have been so much upon my guard, as to have prevented it; but with the latter, he steals upon you so imperceptibly with his silkiness, and with the cursed baboonery of his grimaces, that you are deceived with your eyes open, and then you find it to be too late to get rid of the Monseer; the mischief is done, and although he may not exactly steal my wife, although that is by no means an improbable case, if the chance were given him, yet to talk of happiness or domestic comfort, if a Frenchman once crosses the threshold of your door, can only be looked for by those, who take grimace for sincerity, profession for actual friendship, plausibility for truth, and sycophancy for integrity."

Every act which the French committed at this time, whether national, political, or domestic, was regarded by Cobbett with the most jaundiced eye. He saw in their victories nothing but treachery, and in their commanders nothing but imbecility. The invasion of Egypt by Buonaparte, was the act of a madman; and his running away from that country the basest instance of cowardice and deceit. The reports which were brought to England of the plans of the French generals in Egypt, and particularly of General Menou, who had taken upon himself the title of Abdallah Menou, called forth in every page of his newspaper the most bitter invectives, couched in some instances, in language too coarse and vulgar to be deemed admissible in any journal, pretending to the slightest degree of respectability. There is, however, after all, something so strikingly original in all he says, so truly unique, so characteristic of the man, that obtuse and callous must be the mind, that cannot be pleased, if not edified with his remarks. Thus it is impossible to peruse the following remarks, which he makes on the proposed attempt of Menou, with the assistance of 10,000 Greeks and Copts, to penetrate into India, without acknowledging that it is Cobbett alone who could have dressed the subject in such a fantastic garb.

When Buonaparte landed in Egypt, that country was governed by seventeen beys, of whom Ibrahim and Muorad were the chiefs. The latter, upon the retreat of the French, re-appeared in great force, and Menou was actually obliged to enter into a treaty with him on equal terms, and resign into his hands the whole of Upper Egypt. A report then was circulated in this country, that Menou was marching with 50,000 men into Syria, and here Cobbett gives his opinion of this expedition.

"Such as it is, and terrible the report, it has alarmed many a quidnunc, and one gentleman snatching up the newspaper from the table, runs breathless to tell the world that Menou was now marching into Syria, at the head of 50,000 men, well organized troops. When I read these and similar absurdities, I always think of Cowley and Sir Richard Howard, and am tempted to say with him, Pray, Sir Robert what harm would it do you, if you had a little common sense. How are 50,000 men to be fed? How are they to be armed? More than a twelvemonth ago, Kleber wrote for 20,000 muskets, of which not one has been received. This is a hint to our cruisers, and no bad one to those who pester us with the armed myriads of Abdallah Menou. The establishments in Egypt, for forging and repairing arms, we know from good authority, have all failed. How then, I repeat, are these 50,000 men to be armed? And what are they to do in Syria? Or can Menou with 10,000 French, effect what Buonaparte could not with 16,000? And what is to become of Egypt in the interim? Buonaparte left 9000 men there, when he marched against Ghezzerat, but our new Sesostriis will not leave a man behind.

"Oh, but India! I cannot eat, nor drink, nor sleep, for thinking of India. Rest, rest thou perturbed spirit, or India will set me in a blaze. Had Menou 50,000 Copts and Greeks, instead of the 50,000 French, with which the English papers so sparingly furnish him, hunger and the desert would devour them to a man, before they reached the frontiers of Bengal. Ah! but then there are Muley Moloc and

Tippoo Saib—no, Tippoo is dead, and Timar Bek, and Almed Shaw, and Genghis Khan, and Saraga al Dowlah, all of them ready to take them by the hand, all eager to taste the rapture of a French embrace. Very good, and when I do hear of any of them shaking Abdallah Menou by the hand, at the head of 50,000 men, excepting, by the by, those who may have died by the way, why then it would be ridiculous in me to carry on the argument any further.

"But then there is somewhere in India, a mercantile tribe of the name of Lodi, with an L, I found them in the map, begging pardon for the interruption; there is also an agricultural tribe of the name of *Foolas*, with an F, and the first four letters of it account for the pertinacity with which some eyes are fixed upon it. But what in the name of wonder has the tribe of Lodi to do here? Why, *my dear sir*, who can tell what influence the remembrance of the famous battle of that name, may have on the superstitious soldiers of Buonaparte? O the Lord help us! where are we now? but patience, and shuffle the cards.

"But we are like an ill-roasted egg, it seems, *damned on all sides*, for though the French may not be able to take India from us, yet the possession of Egypt will enable them to monopolize its commerce, and then good night to our prosperity."

That Cobbett was an egotist in its most extended sense, no one, we presume, will be hardy enough to deny, and if he could not get any one to flatter him, he would flatter himself. Proud, therefore, was he, when as the editor of the Porcupine, he received his adulatory epistles from the shores of America, in which the writers are not merely content with allowing him the possession of uncommon abilities, but style him as the benefactor of Europe. In what department he had hitherto shown himself in that character, the writers forgot to mention, with the exception, that in stemming the mania of republicanism, he had conferred a blessing upon the civilized world, greater than an Alfred, a Newton or a Watt.

Thus, says one of his encomiasts; "I have learned from

the public papers, that you intend to employ the quills of your Porcupine once more on the side of religion, morality, and good government, and of course against *that spirit from the bottomless pit*, which for the last ten years has been waging ruthless war against heaven (?) and earth. If this were not your motive, you would hardly undertake a second time to conduct a public paper, when you might advance your fortune fast enough by much easier means.

“But I am persuaded there is no line in which you can so effectually serve your country. You possess peculiar advantages, that qualify you for the important business of conducting a public paper in these times. There are editors in London, who have talents and a considerable share of the true English spirit, but not one is furnished with so much practical information on the subject of republicanism, the political mania of the day, as you are; you have wintered and summered it in a country where the republican system has had every advantage of displaying its charms and benefits, if it has any. In short, if the system of republicanism were fitted for the use of that corrupt creature, man, anywhere, this (the United States,) was the favoured region, but experience has proved the reverse of the proposition; it has evinced beyond a doubt in my mind, that the liberty enjoyed in a representative republic, such even as the American, tends to corrupt good men, to make the bad worse, and finally, to place power in the hands of the most daring and artful, to the destruction of religion, morality, and genuine public spirit. You can cite a variety of instances to substantiate this truth, of which your fellow labourers are entirely ignorant, or know only from doubtful report. If, like the good old scribe, you draw out of your treasury things new and old, of this instructive kind, you will certainly contribute to write the existing disorders of society into disgrace, and become *the benefactor of Europe*.”

Taking advantage of this encomium, Cobbett enters upon a panegyric of the superiority of the Porcupine over the majority of the daily newspapers, and when he wrote the

following, he did not suspect that he was cutting a stick to beat himself with. "The Porcupine," says Cobbett, "cannot boast of being seen in the numerous pothouses of the metropolis, but we have the superior advantage of being generally read by persons of *property, rank, and respectability*; in the public offices, as well as *in the best private families*, a preference which we shall endeavour constantly to deserve, by adding every exertion in our power to the soundness of those principles, which first recommended us to the distinguished patronage already obtained."

This as a puff direct was perfectly admissible and quite in the way of business. But the admission that the paper was read in the best private families, exposed the editor to several most virulent attacks on the vulgarity and coarseness of the language for which it was distinguished. One of his correspondents, the most good-natured of all of them, thus proffers his advice.

"Excuse me offering you a hint or two, arising from the remarks I have accidentally heard upon your paper by your friends and well-wishers.

"They perfectly approve of you lashing your opponents with the utmost severity, but strongly recommend that the *language* should be as polished, and the ideas and terms as select as possible.

"The satire will be the more keen on that very account. The comparison, some days ago, of the dog returning to his vomit, &c. or any idea or expression, bordering upon *coarseness*, however forcible, offends the more refined inhabitants of this kingdom, where literature and classical knowledge are so generally diffused. Strong expressions of the kind I allude to, are the very best, probably, for America, where there are men of forcible ideas, and *less of elegant taste or literary refinement*.

"I know that many ladies of *highly cultivated understandings* read your paper. In circles of great extent, and even to those, whose principles are congenial with your own, **THEIR** recommendation, believe me, is of great importance to the

cause of loyalty, as well as the sale of your paper, in the support of that cause; you will hence see the sincerity of my motives in giving you these friendly suggestions."

This was very courteous; the following, however, is of a different character:—

"You tell us, Mr. Cobbett, in your Address to the Public, that your paper is read in *the best private families*, ought you then not to be ashamed of yourself to make use of those expressions, so coarse, vulgar, and indelicate, as show you more fit to be the editor of a Billingsgate journal, than that of an English newspaper; do you forget that you are writing for an English public, and not for a crew of American savages, who can scarcely distinguish between that which is coarse and that which is refined, between that which is modest and that which is indelicate. In what school were you bred, that you are so apt at blackguard phrases—did you learn them in your father's stables, or are they an importation of your own, from the country of the Yankees? Do you suppose that any female of polished and refined manners, will not be disgusted with the coarseness of the fare, which you are continually laying before your readers, as if they, like yourself, had an appetite for such vulgar stuff? Do you not know that it is the vulgarity of some of our best writers, which expels their works from the tables and book-shelves of the delicate and the refined; and do you hope to succeed with your nauseous trash, or to make a convert to your principles, by defiling your pages with vulgar ribaldry, and coarse invective? Your godfather and your godmother have not infringed the obligation, which they swore to perform—you have been taught the vulgar tongue with a vengeance; and to quote yourself, I'll be d——d if you be not one of the greatest proficient in it, that I have lately met with.

"I am yours, &c.

"CASTIGATOR."

Notwithstanding this severe castigation, Cobbett perse-

tered in his customary style of writing. It was, nevertheless, admitted, that the pages of the Porcupine were not made the vehicle of personal slander; and in this respect he had, in a very short time, a fair opportunity given to him of retaliating upon those papers, and particularly the Times, which had inserted some of the letters relative to the coarseness and indelicacy of his language, and this was on the occasion of an article, that was said to have appeared first in a Paris paper, and thence copied into the Times, but it was evident that the whole article was of English manufacture.

The circumstances which drew from the pen of Mr. Cobbett, the celebrated philippic against the Times, were as follow:—

“ Lord Nelson, on his return from the Mediterranean, travelled over land with Sir William and Lady Hamilton; and during their stay at Hamburgh, amongst the distinguished personages who hastened to pay their respects, was Dumourier, and during their short stay in that city, the ex-general was invited to one of the parties, where, according to the statement of the Times, the following scene took place:— After supper, Lady Hamilton sang *God save the king*, at the request of Lord Nelson; but when she came to the couplet reflecting on France, she was interrupted by his lordship. Dumourier, who had listened in ecstasy to the sweet melodies of the enchanting warbler, deeply affected by this act of delicacy, burst into tears. Lady Hamilton, fancying she saw the tears of a royalist, of a heart overflowing with love for its country, glistening in his eyes, wept in excess of softness. Lord Nelson began to weep from *sympathy*, and old Sir William Hamilton went to a distant corner of the room, and wept to keep the rest company. Lady Hamilton, in constant activity, wiped away the tears of the admiral with her handkerchief, *fondly*, then those of her husband, *slightly*, then those of Dumourier, *kindly*, then her own, *delicately*; and then Dumourier, falling on his knees, implored, as the greatest possible favour, that the charming Lady Hamilton would make him a present of the handkerchief. Lady Ha-

milton softened into compliance, the favour was granted; and Dnmourier having received the handkerchief with a holy respect, retired to meditate on the miraculous destiny, which had deigned to unite in his favour, in the same handkerchief, the relics of so many great personages. To see, touch, and kiss this famous handkerchief, are now considered on the Continent the proudest honours, and as such, are sought with all the enthusiasm of superstition."

Without attempting to decide upon the truth or falsity of this statement, although there cannot be two opinions respecting the varnish which is thrown over it, there were few circumstances, which more excited the choler of Cobbett, especially, as it tacitly threw a slur upon loyalty; and secondly, as he considered it an infamous attempt to tarnish the reputation of the great naval hero, to wound his feelings, and to destroy *the peace of his family*. "But," says Cobbett, "in the breast of what demon was this scandalous lie begotten? Some fiend of hell must have invented it, to fill up the measure of his infernal malice. It is said to have appeared in a Paris journal! What a base and despicable falsehood! What Paris journal is it said to have appeared in? And how comes a Paris journal to talk about the estimation, in which the handkerchief is held *on the Continent*, when it could know no more of the feelings and sentiments of the people on the Continent, than of the natives of China or Japan. It is, however, a phrase which, in the manner in which it is used, is peculiar to these islands. Besides, were we to admit the paragraph to have been found in a Paris paper, does that justify its publication in a London paper? base and insidious must be the wretch who could have inserted it. If that be the case, the characters of those who distinguish themselves in fighting against the French, are at the mercy of that calumniating race, and of their numerous co-operators in this country. But this is a supposition too absurd to be dwelt upon; it is contrary to law, to common sense, and to reason.

"What was the price of this slanderous paragraph, we

shall not pretend to determine, for information on that subject, we must refer to the *present proprietors of the Times*, but whether it cost thirty pieces of silver or thirty pieces of copper, it is the most shocking instance of ingratitude, that even these enlightened days have produced. If at the time, when Buonaparte was mourning over the loss of his fleet, some compassionate demon had whispered in his ear:—‘Be comforted, son of Mahomet, for the man who has blasted your hopes, shall upon his arrival in his native land, be robbed of his good name, and of his domestic peace by a publication, having the arms of his sovereign at its head.’ If a prophecy like this had been communicated to the Corsican, even from Alla himself, he would not have believed it. He’ll know us better in time. He’ll know how to estimate British gratitude as correctly as he has done French liberty.

“Tell us not that the *nation* is innocent of what we impute to the *Times*; those who print that paper print it to *sell*. They well know what suits the taste of their customers, and it was to gratify that taste, that the article which I now censure was inserted. It is in vain for a people to pretend that this publisher is a fool, or that publisher a jacobin; the mass of newspaper publishers, like all other tradesmen, provide such goods for the market, as they find the best sale for; and it would be just as reasonable to blame the hair-dressers for the scratchwigs that disfigure our beaux, as it is to inveigh against the news-printers for the contents of their papers. The public papers, wherever the press is free, be they good or be they bad, stamp the sentiments and the character of the nation. But that a journal pretending to the slightest degree of respectability, should have been made the vehicle of personal slander upon the character of an individual like Nelson, who was then on his return to his native country, to receive the thanks of the united people, for the achievement of one of the greatest victories recorded in the annals of her navy, can only be looked upon as an act of some base hireling, some pensioned pander, who will feed on any offal, so that its avaricious appetite be satisfied.”

It would be irrelevant in this place, to enter into any disquisition of the circumstances which led to this ebullition of temper, on the part of Cobbett, and into which he was undoubtedly impelled by the exuberance of his loyalty, but had he been actuated at the time by a little discretion and prudence, he would have suffered the subject to drop, and not have brought it before the view of the public, as an injury done to the character of Lord Nelson. Nor could any thing be more injudicious, than the exhibition of his lachrymose feelings for the destruction of the *domestic peace* of his lordship, for it would require a stronger head, than even Cobbett himself possessed, to show us how that can be destroyed which never existed. Nelson knew domestic peace by name only, for as to the enjoyment of it, it seemed to be beyond his reach, or more probably, that he did not seem to care for it. It was impossible, except a person were wilfully blind, to be unacquainted with the shameful connexion which existed between Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson; nor could Cobbett have been ignorant of the disgraceful conduct, which was exhibited by those two individuals on their arrival in England from Hamburgh. Instead of separating as they ought to have done, for a little while, out of respect to private feeling and public decorum, Sir William Hamilton, his lady, and Lord Nelson, all proceeded to take up their residence at the same hotel, where Lady Nelson and the venerable father of the admiral already occupied apartments. It is impossible to account for so flagrant an indecorum, on any other ground, than an absolute intention of giving offence to the sensibility of a wife, knowing as Lady Hamilton did, that the notoriety of her connexion with Lord Nelson, had been long and loudly talked of, not only in Italy but in England. Any woman, therefore, who had the smallest regard for her own character, or respect for the feelings of a wife and a father, would have avoided the slightest occasion of giving them uneasiness, at the very first interview between them and their gallant relative. But, as if Lady Hamilton had lost all idea of propriety in the climate, where she so long danced the circle of pleasure,

the sober customs of England were treated by her with utter contempt, and she also evinced such a total insensibility to the mental wounds which her presence inflicted, as shewed but too clearly a determinate plan to effect that fatal breach, which shortly afterwards she was able to accomplish.

The political biases of Cobbett, however, led him from a true and impartial estimate of those characters, who were figuring on the great stage of Europe. He could not discover a scintillation of virtue in a Frenchman, nor of honesty and integrity in a republican, and it should be borne in mind, that no one had treated those individuals, who had rendered themselves obnoxious to him, with greater severity, nor with a more uncompromising vengeance, than Cobbett himself, descending at times to the lowest blackguardism, and throwing around him a stream of the most seculent matter, wherewith to blacken and disfigure his opponents.

Cobbett, by his peculiar temperament, was not formed to consider dispassionately the actions of others, much less the motives by which those actions were regulated. He had but few, and very few criteria, whereby to judge of an individual, and those criteria were, in some respects, adjusted by a kind of obliquity of vision, which was natural to him on all subjects connected with politics. What is biographical history but the philosophy of teaching by example? and this definition will be found to be particularly just, when applied to that branch which is devoted to the memoirs of those persons who have been conspicuous in their day, either by their own actions, or by the influence which they possessed over those of others, and in no sense will those principles more aptly apply, than in the life of Cobbett himself, for we must not consider him so much in reference to his own immediate actions, as to the influence which they had upon the whole political world. The efficiency of every such biography for a moral purpose, consists in the truth with which it is told, and the lesson it is intended to impart. Hence it is obvious, that fancy has little to do with the province of the biographer; it is his duty to relate facts as they happened, without exaggeration or dis-

tortion, to specify their causes and trace the actions to their motives and consequences. This cannot be done without delineating the primary movers and agents of the transactions, exactly as they were known to the most intimate of their associates. In default of general information, there is, perhaps, no source so spurious and suspicious as that which is taken from the description furnished by the individual himself; the great and leading principle of the *audi alteram partem* is thereby extinguished, and had we, perhaps, the means of investigating many of the actions which Cobbett describes as having occurred to him during his residence in America, we should perhaps discover that the fault was not always in that quarter, where he imputed it, but that in some instances it strictly belonged to himself. Were we to adopt that mode of depicting human life, through the medium, as it were, of a reverted telescope, and, particularly, as that life may have been remarkable in the conduct of those, who now cease to affect the world, except as warnings or examples, it would have the effect of producing false ideas of the faculties of man, and the most pernicious notions of his duties. Of those persons who have raised themselves by their talents or their bravery above their cotemporaries, we should not be able to form any other conception, than what is excited by the report of wonders, which are magnified and distorted by not being distinctly beheld. The mistake of describing the fair side of human nature only, has a direct tendency to contract the mind within a sphere, wherein little exertion will seem requisite to become eminent, either in knowledge or virtue. The voyage of life abounds with difficulties and dangers, which, to be overcome, must be encountered with that resolution which is the effect of diligence, and the confidence that results from caution.

We include not ourselves in the number of those good-natured people, who consider that nothing should be said of the dead, but what is good, for we dissent in toto from the principle. It seems, indeed, to inculcate a spirit of benevolence, but it is sacrificing the interests of the living to a

mawkish sensibility for the dead ; at all events it never could have been intended to operate as an act of indemnity, to cover the deeds of those who have endeavoured to loosen the foundations of morality by their precepts, or to render vice attractive by their examples. The profligacies and debaucheries of a George IV. ought not to be concealed, because he is gone to answer for them at a tribunal where no respect is paid to kingly dignity ; they will stand forward as a warning to future princes, that they may thereby escape the hatred and indignation of the people, over whom a wayward fortune has destined them to rule. We have an imperative duty imposed upon us, of doing strict justice to all concerning whom we may be called upon to give the testimony of our knowledge, and of adhering strictly to truth, in what we relate of the conduct of others, whether they be in the habit of speaking for themselves, or are placed beyond the possibility of being affected either by our praise or censure. Were the doctrine otherwise, and did it lay survivors under the immutable obligation of concealing the obliquities of those who have been removed from this busy stage, where every action of the humblest individual has some connexion with his cotemporaries, and effect on posterity, history would be no better than romance, by depriving mankind of the lessons for the regulations of life, which are afforded by the contemplation of human infirmity. To deprive the living of the examples which the dead hold forth, is tantamount to concealing from the pilot the rocks on which his vessel may be wrecked. Coloured by the partiality of friendship, and shaded by an excess of liberality, the examples of even the most upright men would lose much of their efficacy, for the want of being rendered familiar by those peculiar touches of character, which can alone enable the mind to form a correct estimate of those qualities which are the object of admiration. Active virtue is most brilliant in the resistance of temptation, and in that conflict which brings the passions under the dominion of reason : but the nature of this trial, and the value of the contest, cannot be appreciated without inspecting human nature

in the varieties of public and private life. In this study, the whole of man must be investigated, if any improvement be expected from the inquiry, but that will be looked for in vain, unless the ruling principle of the mind be distinctly marked, the favourite pursuits clearly exhibited, and all the circumstances relating to them faithfully detailed. No judgment is to be formed of men from particular incidents; and it would be as useless to think of obtaining a correct knowledge of their real character in the bustle of the world, as it would be idle to leave the completion of our own to the meditations of a cloister. Virtue and vice are often so confounded, through the ignorance and weakness of mankind, that to be guarded against the artifices which are used to pass off the one for the other, it is necessary to examine both, as they appear recorded in the lives of those who have distinguished themselves by their merit, or become notorious for their crimes. There is such a mixture of different qualities in every person, that no exact idea of any one can be obtained from a representation, in which only the general outline of character is given, without a discrimination of excellences and defects. Where these are not stated with fidelity, and balanced with judgment, the reader is misled, and the interests of truth are violated.

Biography was a department of literature into which Cobbett never entered, and from his partialities and prejudices, he was wholly unfit for it; on the same principle, he vented his abuse upon those, who delineated a character with its virtues and defects, as it appeared upon the world: for, according to his mode of reasoning, the historian or the biographer was committing a gross injury upon the individual, who ventured to point out a single blemish, which a great naval or military hero might possess, whose vices ought to be merged in the services which he had rendered his country, especially, if amongst those services could be enumerated, a complete drubbing to the French. The historian, however, who, in the full glow of patriotic ardour, would blazon the victories of Nelson, would in the opinion of Cob-

bett, have been guilty of an act of baseness, if he had ventured to describe the scandalous scenes which took place with Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton, at Palermo, and which will ever remain an indelible stain upon their respective characters.

We, however, shut not our eyes to the errors of men, who by their great achievements have deserved well of their country; for such is the wise order of Providence, that the very errors and crimes of men are often subservient to the public good, as beacons and land-marks to warn other passengers, in their probationary course, against falling by those delusions, which have proved fatal to so many of the human race. Thus it is, that the best of all books exhibits numerous instances of the lapse of men, who on other accounts are set forth as bright examples of fortitude and self-denial. In the volume of immortality, where piety is exemplified in all the relations which man can be supposed to fill, we are taught how to imitate the virtues we admire, and to practise the duties enjoined, by a minute relation of the evils attending an occasional departure from the path of rectitude. It would seem then, as if no apology could be necessary for the practice of describing men, as they truly were, when they lived among us, and of reporting their actions with impartiality, since in this we do no more than what is recommended by the highest authority. For the purposes of moral edification, this delineation of the human character is essentially necessary, and with the view to the formation of an exact judgment of mankind, it is indispensable. Memoirs, written with a studied intention to render the subject pleasing, are like pictures, in which likeness is neglected for the sake of beauty.

An evil practice has of late years prevailed of eulogizing persons of note, instead of giving a detailed account of their pursuits and sentiments, the habits which they acquired, and the errors into which they occasionally fell. This method of substituting panegyric for history has become so general, that it would not be surprising to see a justificatory memoir of

Guy Fawkes, or an apology for the conduct of Nell Gwynne, or Dolly Jordan.

To such a height of paradoxical extravagance has this spirit been carried amongst us, that men of genius have laboured with diligence in searching for imaginary causes, or in devising sophistical arguments, to defend the criminal conduct of those, who never were able to vindicate themselves. The most sanguinary regicides of ancient and modern times, have been canonized as patriots; men, who trampled upon every principle of humanity, and women, who cast aside all the traces of modesty, have had their respective advocates; even the lustful prophet of Mecca has had more than one apologist, and some of the most furious persecutors, who armed themselves with the Bible in one hand, and the sword in the other, have found writers to maintain their principles, and to justify their actions.

But in nothing has this violation of literary justice been more notorious, than in the ordinary practice of sacrificing historical verity at the shrine of public opinion, or to gratify the feelings of private friendship.

In the delineation of private character, no one must look for impartiality in the writings of Cobbett; he never knew how to steer a middle course between truth and fiction, between reality and exaggeration; in the individuals, against whom he had imbibed a prejudice, and particularly a political one, he could never discover a single virtue; in those, who, according to his own opinion, had offered him an insult, or committed a wilful injury, it was in vain to expect from him the acknowledgment of a single action, which could entitle them to a respectable station in society. In this view, he was a man most unfitted for the superintendence of a newspaper, his biases and prejudices were so strong, and had such a decided inclination to one party, that he wilfully shut his eyes against many historical facts, which had a tendency to exalt the character of the opposite party, or to degrade that, to which he had attached himself. The prejudices,

which had been so conspicuous in the pages of his publications in America, accompanied him to the shores of England, and exhibited themselves in the same severe and unflinching tone, in the management of his Porcupine newspaper. Rush, Dr. Priestley, the Bradfords, and all those who had dissented from his principles, or whose principles themselves he fancied, partook in any degree of republicanism, were on every occasion which he could seize, brought into the pages of his Porcupine, as the favourite objects, on whom to vent his spleen and malevolence. Cobbett abused every one, who ventured upon the delineation of the private character of any individual who had distinguished himself, either in the field, the senate, or the closet, against the French, particularly if the dark side of the character were exposed, or in other words, if the vices of the individual were held up to public odium. He fancied, that in some respect, he possessed a prescriptive right to abuse whom he pleased, but he would not allow any one to take the same liberty with one whose cause he had espoused, without bespattering and bedaubing him with all the feculence of his vulgar abuse. To establish his own position, he hesitated not to suppress facts, which, had they been candidly and impartially related, would have placed the individual in a wholly different light. Cobbett frequently takes care to inform us, that he is no flatterer; no one ever accused him of the act, when he was speaking of an individual opposed to him in political principles; but what was his panegyric, his exuberant eulogium of Pitt, but direct, nauseous flattery, of which he himself repented in after years, when he discovered, that the epithet of "heaven born," which he had himself often applied to him, was, in effect, a direct misnomer, and that if a place very opposite to heaven, had been substituted for it, it would have been rather more consistent with truth, and more applicable to the individual, as far as the crimes were concerned, which he had committed against the welfare, prosperity, and stability of the country.

Mr. Cobbett was of opinion, that because Nelson, we speak it comparatively, had vanquished the French fleet, it was the

acme of scoundrelism in any one to dare to point a finger at him, relative to his disreputable connexion with Lady Hamilton; but they who so grossly impose upon the curiosity of the public, by perverting that to flattery, which should be solely devoted to the interest of truth, are always ready to avail themselves of the language of the poet, in drawing a veil over the actions of the dead:

"No further seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode."

But, however just this monition may be in private life, where the disclosure of infirmities would only serve to sharpen malice and to inflame the passions, without any instructive end, it cannot be admitted in the exercise of that judgment, which we have a right to form and express concerning the character of those persons, who have borne a leading part on the theatre of the world. Then, surely if the memoirs of men are to be noticed at all, they must be related with a scrupulous regard to truth, though by so doing, the fame of the dead should be affected, or the feelings of the survivors be hurt by the exposure.

Some have supposed that no good can result to human society from the publication of human imperfections, and that the moral interest of the age is little concerned in the private pursuits of men in high stations. This wretched conclusion is refuted by the consideration, that many of the most important events of history have originated in circumstances, the particulars and effects of which could not be known or justly estimated, without an exact acquaintance with the ruling dispositions and favourite connexions of the primary agents. It was the private pursuits of Nero and Caligula, which have carried their names to the latest posterity loaded with execrations; it was the private pursuits of Paul of Russia which led to his assassination; it was the private pursuits of George the Fourth, which have stamped him as one of the greatest libertines and profligates of his age; it *is* the *private* pursuits of the Duke of Cumberland, which, if he does not take special heed, will soon disencumber the country and the

world, of one of the most illustrious centaurs, who ever polluted it with its presence. Great revolutions may sometimes be traced to occurrences of the most trivial moment; the indigestion, and the consequent ill-humour of a favourite courtesan, has, before now, determined the fate of empires, and, therefore, it is futile in the biographer or historian to abstract his attention from the consideration of trivial events, for although apparently insignificant, it is necessary that they should be carefully examined, and faithfully stated, to prevent the establishment of false principles, or the application of unjust censure. Nations are taught wisdom as much by errors and misfortunes, as by great achievements. Individuals reap instruction as much from the vices, as they do from the virtues of individuals; but neither on the one hand, would splendid actions operate effectually as objects of imitation, nor on the other, could failings be rendered beneficial as warnings, if the private history of parties immediately interested in them, were disregarded.

Though hardly anything can be more odious than the depraved appetite, which, delighting chiefly in secret history, makes no scruple of rending off the cerements of the dead, to the annoyance of the living, still there are some occasions, when the paramount interests of mankind demand the detection of hypocrisy, and the exposure of folly, that the young and inexperienced may be guarded against the error of substituting accomplishments for duties, or of supposing that the admiration of virtue is equivalent to the discharge of its obligations.

Passion and prejudice have too long prevailed over the public mind with respect to circumstances, concerning which posterity will demand an honest report. It is, therefore, time, that the voice of justice and humanity should be calmly heard, and that reason should take her seat, to record facts, before they shall have faded from the memory, and before the tongue shall be sealed up in silence, or the hand be mouldered into dust, that may have the power of communicating them to the world.

CHAPTER VII.

THE resignation of Mr. Pitt in February 1801, on the great Catholic question, drew forth from Mr. Cobbett some very able letters, relative to the dangers, which would occur to the state, were the disabilities of the Catholics to be repealed. One concession after another, on the part of the British government, during the whole of the king's reign, had abundantly secured to the Irish Catholics their civil and religious rights, and admitted them too, into as great a participation of political power, as was thought compatible with the tranquillity of the state, and even with solemn and religious engagements. They were only excluded from sitting in parliament, and from holding about thirty public offices. The men of property amongst the Catholics were not, in general, discontented with their condition, though the great mass of that body, labouring under many real grievances, totally unconnected with the question of religion, were turbulent and prone to innovation. This disposition was fostered by ambitious and factious men, who aimed, by a dexterous management of this engine, to force themselves into the first offices of public trust and emolument. Men of the fairest characters, as well as the first fortunes, were seduced by an agitation that was neither founded on any just complaint, nor yet in reality formidable, to give their voice and influence for what they called a complete Catholic emancipation, even before the Union of Ireland with Great Britain. As nearly nineteen parts in twenty of the property of Ireland were in the hands of Protestants, there was no evil, they reasoned, to be apprehended from the complete emancipation of the Catholics, inasmuch as representation was to be governed by property. But it was said, on the other side,

that if this computation of comparative property was nearly the truth, and the computation of the comparative numbers of five or six Catholics to one Protestant was also near the truth; when eighteen or nineteen in twenty, reckoning Catholics and Protestants, as to number, possessed little more than one part in twenty as to property, and both parties were admitted to equal rights of office, where was the man bold enough to undertake for the tranquillity either of the church or the state?

The British Minister, aware of the danger, did not encourage the claims of the Catholics, or perhaps it might be equally accurate to say, the claims made for the Catholics, while Ireland should possess a separate and independent legislature. The danger of granting all to the Catholics, would no doubt be diminished, when the representatives of Ireland should be blended with British lords and commons. And Mr. Pitt gave the Irish Catholics assurances, or at least every reason to expect, that a complete participation in all manner of political privileges and power would be granted to the Irish Catholics after the union, not as a matter of right, but of grace and favour on the part of Great Britain. It was evident, however, that Mr. Pitt, in the execution of that design, must have had remaining difficulties to encounter. His plan would interfere with the Toleration Act, the Bill of Rights, the Act of Settlement, and even with the Union between England and Scotland. But there was yet another difficulty, which the minister, when he pledged the faith of government for Catholic emancipation, did not foresee, and it proved insuperable. When he advised that measure, he either did not recollect the king's coronation oath, by which he had bound himself to maintain the Protestant religion, established by law, or he did not hold it to be insurmountable. Yet, on the terms of this oath, the first king of the house of Hanover mounted the throne, and the present king of the house of Hanover, sits upon the same throne, having solemnly and publicly infringed it.

We have entered into this prefatory statement of the great

question which then agitated the councils of the nation, for the purpose of drawing the attention of our readers to the opinions of Cobbett, which were at this time most industriously circulated by the high church party, who saw in the emancipation of the Catholics the total subversion of the Protestant faith. We are also particularly desirous to give his sentiments on this subject, as they were in 1801, as we shall have to contrast them with those, which he held at a subsequent period of his life.

"As the law of the kingdom now stands," says Cobbett, "toleration in religious matters is universal. Not only may every man freely profess, and openly exercise whatever religion he pleases, without let or molestation; not only does the law permit him to do this, but it protects him in doing it, and severely punishes all those who dare to interrupt his devotions, however whimsical or superstitious those devotions may be. But while the law is thus generous, it does not lose sight of justice; while it refrains from persecuting sectaries, it does not forget the protection which it owes to the national church; while it forces no man to be of this or that religion, it takes care that no man shall have it in his power to undermine and destroy the religion of the country.

"I will now give my reasons for opposing the projected measure of a minister, of whose talents I have long been a sincere admirer, and whose character and conduct I have voluntarily defended at the expence of my peace and property, and not unfrequently at the hazard of my life.

"The acts of which Mr. Pitt's measure would have produced a repeal, proceed upon the principle, that no man should have the management of public affairs, who is not disposed to manage them conformably to the constitution as established by law; and further, that there is no way more desirable of becoming who are so disposed, than that of their continuing in some solemn ceremony ordained by the church. This has been grossly denominated a *qualifying for office*, which term, the qualification for office, is the *being of sound mind and principles, and of a disposition to support the law*

and constitution of the realm. The church, *of which the king is the head*, is a part of that constitution, and is on all occasions, deservedly placed before the state. The church, therefore, must be supported by all those who come into public trusts. Our king can no longer enjoy his throne, than while he is a Protestant, and so cautious is the constitution on this head, that it extends its restrictions to the private affections of the sovereign, and forbids him to take a Roman Catholic consort.* Why then, should peers, whose hereditary honour is certainly not of higher descent than the kings?† and why should we allow our laws to be discussed and revised by legislators and judges, who must necessarily abhor that constitution, which will permit none but ‘a heretic’ to mount the throne, and who, if they be true and conscientious Catholics, must use their utmost endeavours for the destruction of such a constitution?

“Those who count upon the future content and gratitude of the Romanists, if the proposed privileges be granted to them, tell us, that they will ask no more, *because there will be nothing left for them to ask.* This is indeed the only ground for hoping to put an end to their claims, but it is not solid. It is not true, that there will be nothing left for them to ask for. With much less ingenuity than the holy father, and his missionaries possess, I can find out several other things, which they could, and which they assuredly would ask for, amongst which would be, *the admission of their bishops into the House of Peers,*‡ against which claim, if the proposed measure were adopted, *I can see no reasonable objec-*

* In defiance, however, of this restriction, George, Prince of Wales, the heir apparent to the throne, married a Roman Catholic lady, by which act he became both a bigamist and an adulterer.

† Cobbett here is in an error. The hereditary honour of some of our nobility, is of much higher descent than that of the Guelpha.

‡ The emancipation of the Catholics did take place, but their bishops are not yet in the House of Peers, and so far from it being likely that they will ever gain a footing there, it is most probable that those who are there now, will not be there much longer.

tion. If men, who spurn at our church, who acknowledge no supremacy but that of a foreign potentate, and who maintain the infamous and blasphemous dogma, that our king is a heretic, doomed, unless he be converted, to everlasting flames; if it be proper, if it be decent, if it be safe to admit such men as legislators, judges, chancellors, and ministers of state, we can perceive no obstacle to their being admitted as bishops also; and we are certain that this concession would very soon be demanded, as a necessary concomitant to the one now proposed.

"It is insisted by certain people, that by the proposed measure, *none of the rights of the Protestant church were infringed or even touched.*" These people, however, perhaps do not know in what the rights of the Protestant church consist. One of the rights of this our church, is, to fill with her own members all the high offices of state; and another of her rights, is, to keep out of the legislature of the realm, all those, who are so determinedly hostile to her, as to deny the supremacy of the king, who is her head. These are rights of no trifling consequence, and these rights would be instantly swept away by that repeal which has been proposed. To come closer to the point, what would be the consequence of the appointment of a Romish prime minister, and a Romish lord chancellor. With these two great officers rest the powers of bestowing almost all the church preferment, during the continuance in office. They must indeed bestow it on clergy men of the established church, but will any one believe that they would be very attentive to the interests, honour, and durability of that church.

"Beside the minister and lord chancellor, there are many others who, for the time being, have great influence in the distribution of ecclesiastical honours and emoluments; and that man must be more than uncommonly incredulous, who does not believe that every Roman Catholic statesman would use that influence to the detriment of a church, which he necessarily hate, as the triumphant rival of his own, which he, as a good Catholic, must think it his bounden duty

undermine and destroy. If we be told that the Roman Catholics, notwithstanding the proposed repeal, would not be appointed to the influential offices of state, I ask, then, what is the use of the repeal? Was it to be a mere trick to pacify the Romanists? I do not think the seceding ministry capable of such duplicity, and if they were, I am sure the trick would not have succeeded. Not only must Roman Catholics have been admitted *in reality*, into the offices of state, but some of them must have been admitted *immediately*, or the measure, instead of producing harmony, would have sown the seeds of additional discord. To open the door to them, and at the same time to keep them from entering, would have been placing them in a sort of political purgatory, to get free from which, they would have spared neither entreaties nor intrigues. In short, they would either with or without the assistance of Peter's successor, have entered the paradise of power, and as far as their influence had extended, they would have filled the church and universities with men infected with the errors of popery. *There would have been a popish faction both in the church and state; continual feuds would have divided the councils of the kingdom; the fountain of church preferment would have been poisoned, and the stream, instead of peace and loyalty, would have carried strife and treason through the land.**

"It is the peculiar happiness of this kingdom, that the national religion is different from that of its nearest neighbour, who also is its most implacable, and most formidable enemy. This circumstance alone has done more for the preservation of our independence than any other, and perhaps more than all others put together. The Romish religion would not, indeed, become the national religion in consequence of the proposed change in our laws, but it would acquire a weight in our po-

* These predictions of Cobbett, according to the opinions of certain politicians, are daily approaching their verification. That Popery is on the ascendant in Ireland, cannot be doubted, and the pillars of the Protestant church are shaking at their base, and their fall will be accelerated by the very individuals, whose business and interest it was to support them.

litical affairs, that it has not possessed since the abdication of the misguided and unfortunate King James II. Not only would the national councils be, in some instances at least, guided by Catholics; not only would the decisions of our legislature be frequently under the same influence, but our seminaries of learning would send forth their pupils, with minds full of doubt, if not full of partiality for our foes. The Protestant Briton sees in every invader the face of an enemy, but the Catholic sees in the very same enemy the face of a friend and a deliverer. Nor can this religious treason ever be rooted out by measures of toleration or of favour. Nothing will satisfy the true Catholic, short of the dominancy of his creed, from the prince to the peasant. There is then no way of rendering the Romanists harmless, *but that of keeping out of power.* Destitute of power, they may load you with their maledictions, and now and then pester you with their vulgar clamours, their pot-house conspiracies, and mobbish revolts; *but once open the legislature to them, once place them on the bench of justice, once let them into the cabinet, and make their bosoms, or rather the bosoms of their confessors the repository of the secrets of state, and if they do not work your disgrace and destruction, you will have better fortune than your prudence deserves.*

"In speaking of the dangers to which the church would be exposed, by what is humourously called Catholic Emancipation, we have not yet adverted to the collateral measures which were contemplated, and which must certainly have been brought forward, to wit, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which would have thrown open the folding doors to all the nameless, numberless rabble of sectaries, the creed of one half of whom teaches them that king-killing is no murder: 'the milk-white hind' would have been followed by the boar, the bear, the wolf, and the fox; the council chamber would have resembled Noah's Ark, and the royal lion would have been the sport of the squabbles, the intrigues, and the treasons of the motley herd.

"We are told that the Test and Corporation Acts are

ready nugatory, for that the sectaries have no scruple to conform to them, without abandoning their religious opinions, whenever they feel a call to fill a post of honour or profit. If this fact be true, it furnishes a pretty good proof of the tenderness of their consciences, without affording any argument for the repeal of the Acts. We do not believe, however, that the tests imposed by these Acts is become *entirely nugatory*, and were it so, so far as regards all those, who conform to it, we should not think that circumstance sufficient to warrant its repeal, any more than we should think it right to repeal the laws against adultery, because adultery is frequently committed, even if we could be assured, that those laws do, *in no case, prevent its commitment*. To repeal a penal or restrictive law, without replacing it by another, is to declare your approbation of the offence, or the propensity which such law was meant to restrain, which, it will be allowed, is a very different thing from suffering a nugatory law to exist. To permit the Test Laws to remain as they are, is perhaps to wink at the intrusion of the sectaries; but to repeal those laws, would be actually to condemn the principle on which they are framed, and would operate as a direct, a loud, a general and pressing invitation to all the mongrel sects to crowd into offices of every description, and to thrust out the members of the church.

“This repeal would soon rob the church of all her secular influence, and the state of all the mighty support, which that influence gives. She would, in fact, be no longer a *dominant* church, and her humiliation, her political insignificance, and *inutility*, would soon encourage the rapacious hand of innovation to seize on and dissipate her patrimony. Already are such projects familiar in the mouths of all her enemies, from the scribblers of Sunday newspapers, up to the agents of agricultural boards. She, who has never been a persecutor, is persecuted without cause, and without measure. She has granted indulgences, which those, who have separated from her communion, would not at one time have presumed to ask for.

But are there to be no limits to these indulgences—because she has granted much, must she grant all? When she sees an enemy undermining her foundation, is she to sit all the day idle? A day of difficulty and danger approaches her, but we hope not a day of disgrace. The papist and sectary will unite, Herod and Pilate become friends, but we trust her friends will rally round her, and that, supported by monarchy, she will put her foes to confusion.”

Such was the opinion of Cobbett on one of the most momentous questions which was ever agitated in the councils of the British nation. He was not, however, satisfied with stating his sentiments as the editor of the Porcupine newspaper, but he circulated the following fable, which was at the time read with great avidity, although some time elapsed before the author of it was known.

A FABLE.

“Once upon a time, there was a certain house, into which the rats had made an entrance by gnawing a hole in the bottom of the main door. It happened that the servants were grown careless, and the traps rusty with disuse, so that the rats were, in a manner, unmolested. Not satisfied with the scraps of the kitchen, they got into the library to nibble the books. They brought the old family Bible into a very tattered condition: they endangered the house, by burrowing deep into the ground, and making themselves nests under the main pillars of this fabric. Notwithstanding all these advantages, they were very much discontented; there were a few plain-spoken servants in the family, who were apt to cry out a rat! a rat! if any of them were seen in the day time, which gave them great offence, and they were now and then reminded of their rat-like nature by others, who shewed them the marks of their teeth at the bottom of the door.

“It was, therefore, proposed amongst themselves, the only way to spare their pride and improve their character, would be to persuade the heads of the house, to take the main door off the

the hinges, that animals of all kinds might have free access, after which there would be no room for odious distinctions and reflections.

"The proposal, though started by only one or two of the forwardest, was readily approved by many others, and their discontent having attained the highest pitch, just at a time when other creatures of the voracious kind were making petitions, they also agreed to make a petition. The difficulty was, how to get a good face upon the business, for as doors are affixed to houses, and porters are stationed on purpose to *keep out* all designing people, *to take off the door by a deliberate act*, would argue an intention of *letting them in*. This difficulty, however, did not stop their proceedings; they knew some would overlook it, and others, who were no friends to the family, would pay little regard to it, so it was at length voted, that the following reasons for making a petition should be submitted to the consideration of the family.

"1st. That they apprehend that rats have an instinct proper to themselves, which no person can deprive them of, and consequently they have a natural right to follow it as far as they are able, in opposition to the tyranny of men. Why was it given?

"2nd. That the door they wish to see removed, is very ill made, very old fashioned, the work of an ignorant carpenter, who knew nothing of modern mechanics, and that if doors are necessary (as they are persuaded in their consciences they are not,) they could make better themselves; that modest people, seeing the door shut, are shy of coming near the house, that the best friends of the family are thereby kept at a distance, and the interests of the master thereby very greatly hurt; that the nature of rats is now much better understood than formerly; that men and rats are growing every day more and more like one another; that there have been two or three men of very great fame, who are known to have kept the tail of a rat privately in their snuff boxes to smell to; that so long as the door keeps its place, they are under the necessity of eating their way through it, or of creep-

ing through the hole made heretofore by their progenitors; that the hospitality of the house is every where ill spoken of, on account of the destructive practices of keeping up the door, and setting a porter at it; that weasels, polecats, foxes, and other useful creatures, who are now obliged to follow the disreputable practice of catching poultry in the outhouses, would be incited to become domestic animals and tender their services to the family, according to their respective persuasions.

"That as the property of the family is already secured by the laws, and the penalties annexed to them, the door is superfluous, it being agreed in every well-ordered community, that it is better to punish an evil than prevent it, that as there is no danger to be apprehended from any one species of animals. except cats, some of the servants of the house having been terribly scratched by them formerly, and the children bitten by a mad she cat,* who kept the whole family in fear for some time, they are ready to express their abhorrence of the teeth and claws of cats, and to give repeated assurances as often as they shall be called upon, that they wish to see the whole generation of cats extinct.

"It may be objected that this application ought to have waited for the concurrence of servants, who are our superiors in the house. to which we answer, that the grievance of being obliged to eat a way through the door, and subjected to the reproach of so doing, is no grievance of theirs, but peculiar to numbers in our present unhappy condition. And we think proper to declare, that we have actually had a consultation with our friends in the outhouses, that we have not the least connection with them, and that we have no hope of assistance from any other class of discontented petitioners. That nothing has moved us to appear in this cause, but a sense of duty, a love of liberty, and a strict regard to the honour of the family, in which we hope to remain with indulgence and reputation. All our own private sentiments shall get the

* We suspect that the cat here made is the big cat Mary of England.

better of all human prejudices, and one spirit and measure become universal."

At a time like the present, when the question is seriously and ably argued of the connection of the church with the state, it may be not only instructive, but of great utility, to make ourselves acquainted with the opinion which emanated from a mind like Cobbett's, on that important subject, and we are certain that his character, neither as a politician, a christian, or a philosopher, will, in the slightest degree, be injured by the promulgation of his sentiments, particularly as they are so applicable to the present times, when so many daring attempts are made to break the connection between church and state, and to prove that the existence of such a connection is at once unnatural, injurious, and unconstitutional.

"From the age of the reformation the celebrated question of the connection of church and state has been mooted in all the societies of the kingdom. It has been anxiously asked, whether the church and state were two societies, or one and the same, though bearing two different names. If the same, whence originates the authority of the church, and what is its object? If not, can the two societies come together? If they can, is it their duty to do so? and if it is, what are the principles on which it is founded? not only different persons, but different churches, and the former too of great eminence in the same church, have entertained very opposite opinions on the subject. It has been the invariable tendency of popery, and I hope it will always be remembered, to bind the state so effectually to the church, as to bring the civil concerns into subjection to its spiritual authority. This it is obvious is not a salutary connection of the two societies for the benefit of their mutual interest, but an overwhelming ascendancy, which buries the just independence of the one, in the assumed control of the other; and let the state beware in the present occasion, while it consigns the reformed

church a captive once more to the ancient popery, it forges also its ancient chains for its own hands.

“ Contrary to this was the outward doctrine of the puritans. They ostensibly taught that the church and commonwealth, being societies totally distinct by nature, there is a separation perpetual and personal between them. However, when they had a church and a state in their own hands, we know too well in what manner they contrived to call in the authority of the one for the purpose of establishing the doctrine of the other. Whitlocke tells us, that in 1649 parliament came to the resolution “ that the government to be established in England, shall be the Presbyterian government,” and what was to be done with the other churches professing Christianity? By the same authority it was ordered, that a way shall be provided for admission of all such churches as tend to godliness, and to advance the kingdom of Jesus Christ, *to be free without disturbances.* And here again the legislature has to learn, that in spite of the standing clamour against the present connection of church and state, the very party, who maintained their eternal separation, were as ready as all others to join them together, in order to support the ascendancy of their own faith. An important lesson to the church too; teaching what is to be expected from the overthrow of its establishment. At the best, it has only to look to a ‘freedom without disturbances,’ under an establishment of a different nature. This ‘freedom’ is indeed genuinely granted by the church now established amongst us, to all those who dissent from its worship and doctrine. We know too well, that notwithstanding their profession of indulgence, they never would grant it to the church, when they had the power of withholding it. Keeping the interpretation in their own hands, suppose they must have concluded that our church did not ‘tend to godliness,’ and to the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, was not fairly entitled to be ‘free without disturbances.’

“ About the time of the accession of his majesty’s illustrious

line to the throne of these dominions, a signal controversy on this subject took place between the churchmen themselves. The question in which Hooker had been engaged with the early Puritans, was revived in another shape. He had proved against them 'the right of civil princes to ecclesiastical dominion.' Now the ecclesiastics were divided concerning the nature of their own church and of the state, and the powers and the limits of the two societies. It was the unhappiness of Hoadley, that he either misunderstood, or misrepresented the nature of religious liberty. Reasoning wrongly upon the declaration of Christ, 'that his kingdom was not of this world,' he disallowed the spiritual prerogatives of that establishment, in which he yet permitted himself to hold so distinguished a station. He broke down the fences of the church, in order to throw it open to one great scheme of comprehension, and converted the prescribed confession of our faith into *mental sincerity*. In short, while he argued against the due authority of the church, and the maintenance of those tests, which it reasonably demanded for its security, conclusions went equally against the establishment of any national church at all. In opposition to him came Sherlock, with ecclesiastical learning, and distinguished powers of reasoning, he proved the right and necessity of a fixed security to the church, and he defended the Test law on the strongest grounds. One thing alone seemed to be wanting. Sherlock, in his anxiety for the safety of the church, had bound it fast to the state, making the primary duty of the magistrate to consist in the support and furtherance of the established religion. This appeared to some, to narrow the grounds of toleration, and it seemed desirable to put the question in some other point of view, which should exhibit the church and state originally independent of each other, yet allied together for their mutual good, and which at the same time should reconcile the security of the establishment, through a test, with a rightful claim of toleration on the part of those, who dissented from the church. On this plan the genius of Warburton constructed his celebrated book, called The "Alliance

between Church and State." In order to save the trouble of those, who will hardly go through so extensive a treatise, for the purpose of making up their minds on the present occasion, I will give a brief analysis of his principles, which he draws from the wide law of nature and nations.

"He begins with showing the use of religion to society in all ages, and describes the universal experience and practice of mankind upon it. Inquiring next, from whence so general a use arose, he finds it to come from those defects in morals, which civil society, apart from religion, never fails to exhibit. He then examines the nature of religion. From the words and appointments of Christ and his apostles, he proves the church to be a society in itself. Then comparing the two societies; he finds that the object of the civil is the *body*, and the interests belonging to it; that of the religious to be the *soul* and its proper concerns. From hence it follows, that moving in separate directions, and having no common origin, they are each of them, sovereign and independent. But for the sake of promoting that moral and religious good, which civil society alone can never attain, it is necessary that an impulse should be given to it by spiritual communication. Here then the alliance takes place by free will of each. But if the church imparts good to the state, it is proper that it should receive some advantage in return. What are the advantages then received by the church? A public endowment from the state for its ministers, *exclusively of all others*; a place for its superior members in the court of legislature, and a jurisdiction, assisted by coercive powers, for the reformation of manners. From hence follows, as a necessary consequence, the freedom of religious opinions and a rightful toleration. For the state, which seeks only its own advantage by the alliance, and which in itself has nothing to do with the *soul*, will not confer a power on the church to punish mere opinions. It looks only on the outward act, as it may be prejudicial to the public, and not to the inward opinion, and, therefore, desires nothing more than sound manners, as essential to the prosperity of its own administrations.

"What again are the advantages received by the state? The supremacy in ecclesiastical matters. The church resigns to it her proper independency, constitutes the king her supreme head on earth, and stipulates neither to administer nor decree any thing without her application and permission. From this alliance result the two great benefits so much desired; one, to all who are within the church; the other, to all who are without it. To the latter, is necessarily extended a full and free toleration; to the former, is granted the security arising from a fixed test, which shall preserve its faith, and exclusively uphold its establishment, in return for the resignation, which it has made to the throne of its original and rightful independency.

"From this short sketch of the opinions which have been entertained on this subject, we are enabled to draw one certain and useful conclusion. To whatever mode of explanation we attach ourselves, whether with Hooker, to maintain the sameness of the person comprehending both the subject of the state and the believer in Jesus Christ; whether with Sherlock, we bind up the guardianship of the church in the sovereign and inalienable duty of the magistracy; or whether again with Warburton, we compound an artificial with a natural personality, and view the church and state originally independent of each other, but coming together for the promotion of their mutual benefit; I say, in whatever manner we interpret the connection, this one undoubted and practical truth will be the result.

"The alliance which the state has with the church, (however the alliance was produced,) is, by the laws and practice of ages, contracted with *one particular church of one denomination*, and of *one determined doctrine and discipline*. Particular attention should be paid to these points. If you violate that principle of exclusive sanctity for which the state stands practically pledged to the church, you dissolve that connection between them, which has been acted upon from the time of the reformation. On the faith of this special guardianship, the church offers her submission to the throne, and looks not

to any other head upon earth. If you give the proposed encouragement to the enemies of the reformation, if you throw open the Protestant establishment to the recurrence of the ancient Popery, you at once let the church loose from its subjection, and by authorizing the subject to look to a paramount head of the church elsewhere, you destroy his majesty's sole and rightful claim to that supremacy, which the reformation settled on the sovereigns of this country for ever."

It was in the month of April 1801, that Cobbett projected the republication of the writings and selections of the works of Peter Porcupine, as they had been published in America, where, according to Cobbett's own expression, liberty was grown to such a height as to render it very unsafe for truth to make her appearance in public, however simple her garb or humble her demeanour.

Cobbett had at this time entered into partnership in the bookselling trade with a Mr. Morgan, and conjointly they took a house in Pall Mall, to which the sign of the crown and mitre was attached, as indicative of the principles which it was the intention of the proprietors to espouse and defend. To those who have had the patience to wade through the twelve volumes of the writings of Peter Porcupine, some surprise must necessarily be felt at the boldness of the speculation, in the reprinting of a work, which was in a great degree confined to American politics, and the interest of which had greatly subsided in this country. The subjects, also, in which Mr. Cobbett had been personally engaged with several individuals in Philadelphia, contained little or no amusement or instruction for the generality of the English readers, and his coarse invectives, and gross vituperation of particular individuals, merely because they differed from him on some of the great political questions of the day, would tend considerably as a drawback to the favourable reception of his works in England. It was not his low and vulgar abuse of such men as Franklin and Priestley, that could degrade them in the opinion of a certain portion of the English people, and although it might have suited the purpose of the writer, to

attempt in every possible manner to defame the character of those two eminent men, yet by a republication of his sentiments towards them in England, he only exposed himself to the scorn and hatred of every lover of philosophy, and a free and liberal mode of thinking.

In his Prospectus, announcing the republication of the writings of Porcupine, Cobbett says, "The diffidence I feel in offering these volumes to the world, would be insurmountable, were it not an established truth, that works of very little literary merit, are often rendered interesting and estimable by the importance of the subject of which they treat, or of the events with which they are connected. Things of no intrinsic value, frequently become valuable, when seen in a relative point of view. The beacon that stands on the shore, is in itself but a mean and insignificant fabric, composed of materials the most common, and fashioned by hands the most rude, yet the salutary caution, which, through its means, the benighted mariner receives, renders it an object of his attention and his care, if not of his gratitude. Such are the lowly pretensions of the works of Peter Porcupine, which, though they present neither grandeur, elegance, nor symmetry, will nevertheless serve to teach the wandering and bewildered politician to avoid the breakers, which surround the yearning and infernal gulph of democracy."

In the foregoing passage, Mr. Cobbett assumes a question, which is not borne out in evidence, nor is it corroborated by experience. Vehemently, and in many respects, unguardedly, as Mr. Cobbett expressed himself relative to the growth of democratic principles in America, and his attendant fears that the same dreadful scourge might befall his own country from its contiguity to France; we have lived to see that America, in the midst of her democracy, has risen to a considerable height in the scale of importance amongst the civilized nations, and that she is advancing in her prosperity, whilst England, under the baneful and cursed influence of aristocracy, is retrograding in those great essential points, which constitute the grandeur and nobility of a civilized people.

When we look to the civil list of this country, for the payment of which the people are taxed at the rate of 75 pounds in every hundred, and when, on the other hand, we look to the expenditure of the government of America under its democracy, we find that for the support of the chief magistrate of the country, not one quarter of the sum is required, that is paid out of the exchequer of this burdened nation, for some demirep of nobility, who, for some *certain services* granted to some of the hopeful members of royalty, is put upon the list of state paupers, to be nourished and pampered by the industry and labour of the working classes of the people. But such are the blessed fruits of aristocracy; we look in vain to the registers of the American for a Lady Bloomfield, who, because she was the wife of one of the most pliant and subservient menials of Carlton palace, has had the rangership of Hampton Court park bestowed upon her, when throughout the whole of her life, she cannot boast of having committed one single action, which could redound to the benefit of the country. What are the services which Sir Frederic Beilby Watson has rendered to the nation, that he should be made a pensioner upon the public purse, to the amount of £1000 per annum? What are the services which Sir Herbert and Lady Taylor have conferred upon the people of this country, that they should pay them annually £1200? The former was a servant of that great and glorious monarch George IV.; it would then have become his majesty to have provided for his servant out of the candle-ends and cheese-parings of his extravagant and debauched establishment, and not have bequeathed him as a dead weight upon the people of this country. Sir Herbert Taylor might have been a faithful servant of the brother of the aforesaid monarch, and certainly it must be allowed that that same brother had nothing to leave, not even a good name, whereby his faithful servant could have been repaid for his services; but the difference between royal people and plebeian people is this, that the former leave the services of individuals to be rewarded by people who never knew what those services were, or rather whether the individuals who

granted them, were not more deserving, on account of their infamy, to parade for an hour every day in the year in the pillory, rather than to be raised in luxury and superfluities; whilst the latter, from a spirit of conscientious feeling and a becoming and laudable remembrance of the services of their faithful servants, provide for them out of their own funds, scorning to leave them as an incumbrance upon the bounty of the stranger. This is, however, but one solitary instance of the difference between American democracy and English aristocracy, although it was wisely conceived by Cobbett, that the reprinting of his Porcupine papers would teach the young politician from being bewildered amidst the breakers, which surround the "yearning and infernal gulphs" of the former.

Speaking further of this new edition of his works, Cobbett says, "After all, however, it must be confessed that I present to the world, neither a history, nor a magazine, nor a journal, but something partaking of the nature of all; a mass of matter left to be separated and digested in the mind of the reader. *It will, indeed, require a considerable stock of patience to go through the twelve volumes, but if any one should have perseverance enough to succeed in the undertaking, I venture to assert that he will derive therefrom more information respecting the manners, customs, the morals, the religion, and the politics of America, than from all the histories and travels, that have ever yet been published.* There is no branch of republican government, whether legislative or executive, civil or military; no right or privilege of the poor sovereign people, no bauble with which he is amused, no trick by which he is deceived; in short, there are none of those means by which liberty contrives to rob a people of their freedom, which are not fully explained and exposed in the facts that I have recorded. I have given a delineation, or rather have furnished the materials, wherewith the reader will be able to delineate above one thousand public characters, and not a small number of private ones. In recording these facts, I have not, indeed, been under the mollifying

influence of modern candour; but I have, in one instance, *knowingly and seriously given falsehood for truth*, and though the reader will sometimes find me severe, frequently very rough, and more frequently very dull, he will never find me irreligious, factious, or servile.

“ The blind and obstinate advocates for American liberty will think me partial and vindictive, but I protest with the solemnity and sincerity due to an oath, that I harbour not the least resentment towards America or her inhabitants. I wish them all prosperity and happiness, but I also wish to convince the world, that their prosperity and happiness have not been augmented by a revolt, though a successful one, *against the mildest, the most just, and the most virtuous of sovereigns.*” (Q, E. D.)

Influenced by the fullest spirit of impartiality, and desirous to award to Cobbett all the merit which is due to him, we cannot, at the same time, close our eyes to those statements which were published by him in the foregoing prospectus of the republication of his American writings, without, in a great measure, disputing the truth of them. In our capacity, as the historian of his life and writings, we have been obliged to wade through twelve volumes of his work published under the signature of Peter Porcupine, and in vain do we look for that information, which he professes to give respecting *the manners, customs, morals, religion, and politics of America*. With the exception of the latter, an individual may rise from the perusal of any of the volumes, or indeed of the whole of them, without being a jot the wiser on any of the points of which he professes to give such enlarged and accurate information. Several of the volumes contain nothing more than the proceedings of Congress, something similar to our Mirror of Parliament; and so rarely are any traits of the American people given in relation to the subjects above mentioned, that the very commonest history of America far surpasses all the writings which Cobbett ever sent forth under the title of Peter Porcupine. It is true, indeed, that as a political writer, and Peter Porcupine can only be con-

sidered in that character, a number of personages come under his review, but would any one be inclined to deduce their opinion of the general character of those individuals, from the delineation which Cobbett has drawn of them? If so, they will find themselves immersed in error and misconception. Cobbett could not discover a single virtue in a French or American democrat; if he comes into collision with a royalist, he bedaubs him with his praises and eulogium; but should a democrat come athwart him, he bespatters him with the most feculent mud which he could gather to throw at him. Well, indeed, might he declare that, in the delineation of character, he was not under the influence of candour; no one will impute such an act to Cobbett in any page of the twelve volumes of *Peter Porcupine*, and as he acknowledges, that he has once knowingly and seriously given falsehood for truth, we have only his bare word for it, that he committed such an act only ONCE; at all events, had he been under the influence of candour, he would have informed us what particular occasion that was, in which he so knowingly and seriously imposed upon his readers, for as the affair now *stands*, twenty of his readers may pick out twenty different cases, and each determine the one which he has chosen to be *that*, on which the brand of falsification ought to be put.

Considering the bent and tone of Cobbett's mind, with a deep and acute sense of observation inherent in him, we hesitate not to say, that his American writings betoken less of the existence of those qualities, than any work of a similar nature, which may have proceeded from a mind of greater dulness and obtuseness. He certainly gives us now and then a faint sketch of the morals of the individuals, but of the Americans as a people, of their customs or their religion, he appears to know little or nothing; to have considered them beneath his study, or not worthy of being related. He tells us that Franklin and Priestley are a scandal to the human race, because their religious tenets differed from his own, but still he would not perhaps have interfered with their religious

principles, and have allowed them to worship the Deity in their own way, if they had not rendered themselves obnoxious to him by their adherence to the democratic propensities of the Americans. Cobbett, in his own opinion, was never in the wrong, and there is very little doubt that a great portion of his early anti-jacobinism, arose from a sheer spirit of contradiction and pugnacity of temper. He in fact deceived himself, he fancied that his principles were fixed, and not to be shaken, but the truth was, that at the early part of his career, he had no fixed principles at all; for he says, speaking of himself, "When I was in America, the first time, I was a mere zealous *prater* of politics. Finding the whole people railing against my own country, I espoused its cause *right or wrong*, and the bank having stopped payment in 1797, I defended bank notes not convertible into gold, it being quite sufficient for me that England had bank notes. But I had not been in England three years, before I clearly saw the wickedness and mischievous tendency of the whole system of debts and paper money." The whole mystery, however, of Cobbett's general conduct is solved, by finding the key to his resolute, self-willed, and obstinate character. He would not be in the wrong, or at least he would not be convicted. But his good sense, and the candour, which though not his most distinguished quality, he was not absolutely without, finally triumphed over his infallibility. Nor should it ever be forgotten, that renouncing very flattering prospects, his conversion was to the *unthriving*, the *militant*, the losing side, or for what for many a year was so, and that however misled by a crotchet, a caprice, or by violent personal feelings, he never once really flinched from the cause of the people. From the moment of *conviction*, he stood firmly and undauntedly by his *order*, and encountered persecution contumely, and hardship, that would have crushed ten times over, any less resolute spirit. The oppression and injustice which he bore, look light, because he bore it so well, or resented it so fiercely, and in some future periods of his life

he speaks so frankly of his early darkness and error, that to insist upon the charge of inconsistency upon this score, becomes almost ungenerous.

The violence with which Cobbett at this time fulminated his wrath against all those who would in any degree interfere with the affairs of the church, as they were then carried on, soon drew upon him a host of enemies, some of whom did not use him in the most courteous manner. The emancipation of the Catholics, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, were wormwood to Cobbett, and from being a warm and zealous advocate of Pitt, he became his opponent, although his hostility was not at first openly nor publicly shown. The attacks, however, upon him became so frequent and violent, that he roused himself on a sudden from his apparent torpidity, and addressed the following letter to Mr. Windham :—

SIR,

During the last seven years of my life, various and harsh are the appellations that have been bestowed on me, by the enemies of my country, but till very lately, I never was denominated a trimmer. Of indiscretion, of violence, and obstinacy, I have often, and sometimes, perhaps, with justice been accused, but it was reserved for a paper, which constantly supported, or rather which was constantly supported by Mr. Pitt's administration, to accuse me of *time-serving*.

It is a maxim, which our wise and equitable laws have engraven on the minds of Englishmen, that to produce the proof is the task of the accuser, I might, therefore, decline to vindicate my conduct against a naked and unsupported assertion, but when I behold myself the *only* conductor of a public paper, who has promptly and unequivocally exposed the danger of Catholic emancipation; when I consider the base views, with which newspaper proprietors do generally act, and perceive that the proof of my sincerity involves in some degree the credit of the cause, which I have espoused,

I think it my duty to wave the privilege of the defendant, to forego the shelter which insignificance might afford me, and voluntarily to enter on a vindication of those motives, from which I have acted in direct opposition to a ministry, who were for many years the constant theme of my praise. If I am asked, why I intrude this vindication on *you*? I answer, that I do it, because I know no man in the world for whose character I entertain a higher respect, or whose good opinion I am more anxious to preserve.

“It was not, sir, the measure proposed by you and your colleagues, that first drew forth the exertion of my poor abilities in defence of the church. In a country (America) where that church had been robbed of nearly her all, and at a time, when the united banditti of infidels and sectaries, were about to seize on her patrimony, I, though a stranger in the land, was the only newspaper printer out of five hundred, that dared openly to espouse her cause. I was more than three hundred miles from the scene of action, and yet I found means to annoy the assailants, to rouse the small remains of religion and honesty against them, and finally to rescue the prey from their sacrilegious hands.”

Cobbett now inserts a long letter, received by him from a member of the legislative assembly of Virginia, relative to the spoliation of church property in that part of America, and there are some remarks in it so applicable to what is now going on in Ireland, relative to church property, that we are certain the friends of the church establishment will thank us for their insertion.

“How uniform in their course are baseness and robbery, whether perpetrated in an eastern or western hemisphere. Except their horrid murders and proscriptions, no measure attendant on the French revolution, has brought on it more merited reprobation, than the confiscation, by the outstretched arm of ruthless power, of the church property. One, who is, alas! no more, who was as great a statesman, as he was a moralist, hath condemned this act of the national assembly as the consummation of tyranny. Who, exclaims he, but a

tyrant, a name which is expressive of every thing which can irritate and degrade human nature, could think of seizing on the property of men, unaccused, unheard, untried, by whole descriptions? He proceeds, Ecclesiastics, say they, are fictitious persons, creatures of the state, whom at pleasure they may destroy, and of course limit and modify in every particular; that the goods they possess are not properly theirs, but belonged to the state, which created the fictions, and, therefore, they are not to trouble themselves, with what these men may suffer in their natural feelings and natural persons, on account of what is done towards them in their constructive character. Of what import is it, under what names you injure men, and deprive them of the just emoluments of a profession? To this some flippant sophister will reply; It is not in the contemplation of the enemies of the church, to deprive the present incumbents of their freeholds. O shameful and shallow artifice! can it be supposed that these reverend persons will relax in their constitutional and legal mode, their opposition to this iniquitous measure, from such a sordid and selfish consideration as the retention of their glebes for their lives? Were such a contemptible motive to influence them, they would justly merit the scoffs and indignation of every worthy man. No, sir, this has no operation on their minds or conduct. They well know, they feel this measure has its root in intolerance. The enemies of our church are not to be taught that it cannot be supported by voluntary contributions. Relying as our pastors do, in the excellency of the institution, in the purity of its rites, in the simple elegance of its liturgy, and in the unostentatious mode of administering its service and its sacraments, they do not address themselves to the passions of their auditors, their discourses do not aim at such insidious objects; they may be delivered with warmth and piety, but furious gesticulations, and more furious exertions of lungs and voice, would have no other tendency, than to bring on them the derision of their congregation, and an expulsion from the altar. Our religious society has less of the intriguing spirit of proselytism than any other, and the profane practices that too many of the

sectaries adopt for the accomplishment of this end, our clergy reject with disdain. What argument will this instance afford to the supporters of the Test and Corporation Acts of England. *It will be a lesson, and an instructive one to them, to show, that if ever they concede one point to the enemies of the establishment, it will only encourage them in their main pursuit—the overthrow of it.* All things established, sacred and profane, it is the unceasing endeavour of these men to subvert and tread under foot.”

Cobbett had witnessed the fatal effects of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in America, and he was now willing and anxious to impress the necessity of their preservation on the minds of the English prelates. In the emancipation of the Catholics, he saw that a wide door would be opened for the admission of other claims, and in the repeal of the Test Acts he saw the flood gates opened to every species of spoliation of the established property of the church. In a manner peculiar to himself he thus draws the picture of the states of America, with the condition of England at the dissolution of the Pitt administration in 1801. Some of his prophecies have not yet been fulfilled, but no doubt can be entertained that they are ripening fast to a consummation.

“At the close of that rebellion,” continues Cobbett, in his letter to Mr. Windham, “which success has varnished over with the name of revolution, the four New England States had the wisdom to preserve inviolate their religious establishment. In those states every taxable inhabitant is still obliged by law, to contribute, according to his means, to some one Protestant worship, and as a great majority of the people are of one persuasion, the establishment, both as to doctrine and discipline, very nearly resembles that of the kirk of Scotland. In some of the middle states the Episcopal church was liberally endowed, and in others the society of Quakers formed so large a portion of the people, that its influence amounted to something very much resembling that of an establishment by law.

“Thus were the sentiments of religion kept alive to the westward, and as far as the boundaries of Maryland, but

there they began to perish. In Maryland and Virginia, and generally in all the southern colonies, the church of England was by law established, and was guarded by *exclusive* rights. Each pastor had a small allotment of glebe bestowed by the crown, and he annually received, by way of tithe, a portion of the crop of each plantation. As long as these rights were preserved, the southern colonies, though they had many evils to struggle with, unknown to the others, were by no means inferior to their neighbours, either in morality or religion. But since all the barriers of the church have been destroyed, since nothing certain has been left to the pastor, but a few acres of land, the scene is totally changed. No wonder, for what clergyman of reputation or talents; what clergyman, who entertains a due sense of the dignity, and sacredness of his profession, will ever become a stipendiary of the state, or which is still worse, depend upon the precarious support, and submit to the capricious whims of those, whom it is always his duty to teach, and sometimes to reprove.

"Hence, sir, the flood of infidelity and immorality, which now threatens to overwhelm the southern states of America, and Virginia in particular. Some of the old clergy do indeed, still remain, but as they drop off, their places generally continue unsupplied. Already are many parishes without any pastor at all. The churches are everywhere fallen into shameful decay. They look like haunted houses, rather than like temples of God. The windows are broken; the doors are dropping off their hinges; the bats and owls have taken possession of the beams, and seldom meet with any disturbance from below, except, perchance, from the nasal bogle of some straggling Methodist, who comes to insult the fallen establishment, and to triumph over the remnant of religion and common sense.*

* Far be it from us to join in the acrimony with which Cobbett, in general, treats the members of the different persuasions, dissenting from the doctrines of the church of England. It is beneath the province of an enlarged and liberal mind to cast a reproach upon an individual, because his conscience prompts him to adopt a mode of faith, differing from that of his neighbour.

“ Such, sir, is the deplorable state of a country, where the authority of our most gracious and religious king was once acknowledged and obeyed. The church was undermined and the throne subverted. But say you, *we* meant not to undermine the church. I beseech you, sir, to mark well the progress of subversion and sacrilege. First, *universal toleration*; next, *universal exemption from tests*; next, *an abolition of tithes*, and last of all, *a seizure of the parsonage houses and glebe*. No, sir, I well know that *you* meant not to undermine the church, but I am not less confident, that the measure proposed to his majesty, would, had it been adopted, have led to the destruction of religion and the law, of the authority of the king, and of the freedom of the people.

“ I trust, sir, that the facts I have here submitted to you, will not be deemed entirely unworthy of your notice; and in the full hope that the part, which I have been impelled, by the strongest motives which can actuate the mind of an honest man, a paramount sense of duty to my king, my country, and my God, to take in the present awful struggle, will not deprive me of any portion of that good opinion, with which you have condescended to honour me, and the continuance of which I am so anxious to preserve.

(Signed)

“ WILLIAM COBBETT.”

The fatal effects of the emancipation of the Catholics, have according to the prediction of Cobbett, not yet fallen upon the country, but that some strong and sinister measures are in progress for the subversion of the church of England under the plausible and specious pretext of reforming its abuses, cannot be concealed from any one, who will direct his attention to some late proceedings in Ireland. The situation of that country is exactly similar to the state of Virginia, as described by Cobbett, and the effects have been brought on by the same slow and gradual means. First Ireland had by the emancipation of the Catholics, *universal toleration* bestowed upon her, next followed *universal exemption from tests*, we are now proceeding in the *abolition*

of tithes, and lastly will come the seizure of the parsonage houses and glebes; the result of all will be the overthrow of the Protestant religion in Ireland and the supremacy of the whore of Babylon.

Cobbett was now rendering himself particularly obnoxious to a certain political party, by his ultra-aristocratical principles, and severe was the language which several of the editors of the London journals employed against him. That Cobbett was a man to return them a Rowland for their Oliver, was soon discovered to their cost, for wherever an injury was inflicted upon him, let it come from whatever quarter it might, it was sure to recoil with tenfold force upon the aggressor. It must be admitted that several editors of the London journals, especially Mr. Perry of the *Morning Chronicle*, descended to many petty annoyances, unworthy of a mind like his, and which tended in no little degree to injure the cause, which he had taken upon himself to espouse. Thus it was the determination of Cobbett to reprint his *Trial of Republicanism*, or a series of political papers, proving the injurious and debasing consequences of republican government and written constitution. The advertisement of this book was sent to the *Morning Chronicle*, with the customary fee, the insertion of it was, however, refused by Mr. Perry, on which occasion, Mr. Cobbett thus forcibly expresses himself :

"The conduct of this paltry printer, I should have treated with silent contempt, were it not a clear indication of the spirit and partialities of those by whom his publication is supported. These men are wont on all occasions to dwell with rapture, on that inestimable blessing, *the liberty of the press*, but if you attempt to make use of that press for the purpose of counteracting the effects of their falsehood and misrepresentations, they instantly have recourse to what they regard as the most effectual means of vengeance, or of suppression. This has been uniformly their conduct from the reign of Charles I. to the present hour.

"Of loyalty too, they are ever full of profession, but if

you inculcate love and veneration for the king, and a cheerful obedience to his commands, if you endeavour to show the superior excellence of monarchical government, to expose the vices of republicanism, or to excite a horror at the crime of rebellion, then you perceive that all their loyal professions, are but a mere palliative of their disloyalty, extorted from them, by the known, and, as yet, unperverted sense and disposition of the people at large.

“Many and foolish enough are the paragraphs, books, pamphlets, and harangues, in which I have seen high wrought eulogiums on the republican government of the American States. I have been in that political paradise. I have not galloped over the surface like Weld, nor have I, like Brissot, been led from one parterre to another by an officious philanthropist. I have dived into the earth, I have examined the soil, stratum by stratum, I have traced the divers plants from the lowest tribe to the topmost leaf, I have seen them blossom and bear, and I have tasted the fruit. I have witnessed the injurious and debasing consequences of republican government and written constitutions, and in the pamphlet, which the Morning Chronicle refuses to advertise, I have clearly exposed some few of them to the world.

“I am aware of the prejudices which I have to encounter. I can see the picture of Washington staring this insulted nation in the face, from the window of every print-seller in London, and from the walls of not a few of those, whom one might hope to see ready to trample rebellion under foot. I know that success on one side, and mercantile avarice on the other, have covered the foulest of crimes with the fairest of veils, and I am fully aware that there are many men in this kingdom, who though now firm friends to the monarchy and the king, never wish to hear a lesson drawn from the woeful experience of America, lest it should remind the world of the foolish part, which *they* acted in the rupture, that gave her, her fatal independence; but not any, nor all of these considerations will deter me from the pursuit of that object, which I have long had in view, and in the accomplishment

of which, if I should be so happy as to succeed, I shall think a life of labour amply rewarded. Neither coldness, neglect, reproach, nor persecution will dishearten me; I shall never want the will to proceed, and industry and economy will furnish me with the means. My progress will be slow, but it will be sure. By continual dropping, water will wear away the hardest marble, and who has not heard that the patient nibbling of the mouse once released the royal lion from his toils."

Mr. Cobbett, in his pamphlet entitled the Trial of Republicanism, in which all the evils of that system of government, as imagined by him, are laid down in his own clear and perspicuous language, and with the same depth of reason and political research for which he was always distinguished, examines the nature of republicanism, under the heads of *The Elective Franchise. Annual Election of President or Governor, and other offices of the State. The Judiciary Department. Annual Representation, &c. &c.*

"In the prosecution of this undertaking," says Cobbett, "I shall proceed upon a plan, which is I believe almost entirely new, and which is certainly better than any other suited to my humble capacity. When a matter is to be decided by reasoning, the result is seldom conclusive, and always precarious, because, full as much depends upon the abilities of the disputants, as upon the intrinsic merit of the case. Even supposing a perfect equality, in point of talents, to subsist between the opponents, the obstacles to a just determination are not removed, for at the very threshold of the controversy, opposite assertions contend for the preference, and should both writers and readers agree to the premises, it is a thousand to one, if they concur in the deductions. Thus are all *argumentative* contests rendered interminable, and thus are the people, some of them pleased, others offended, others amused, but a far greater portion, bewildered and misled. To obviate similar consequences in the present instance, I shall lay reasoning aside, and rely entirely upon facts. That my arrangement may contribute as much as possible, to a clear

comprehension of my matter, I shall adopt that form of proceeding, which is most familiar to Englishmen. I shall suppose you the advocate of republicanism, and myself its accuser, and the people of this kingdom I shall suppose a jury, empannelled to try the issue of the cause. Having made these previous dispositions, I thus address myself to the unpervverted good sense, and uncorrupted integrity of the nation.

“GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY.

“The insolent republican Paine, whose work Mr. Erskine defended, tells the people of England that they are slaves, because they are governed by a king, and because the constitution of their government, does not, like a legal contract, consist of a certain number of articles, defining the rights, and circumscribing the power of the parties. I have not the injustice to say, nor to insinuate that Mr. Erskine, or any of his noble and honourable friends, carry their notions to this excess of absurdity; but I shall not be accused of a want of candour, in asserting that their vehement and persevering clamour for ‘REFORM,’ *do directly tend to unsettle the minds of the people*, and to make them sigh for a state of things, somewhat resembling that, which those honourable men have very judiciously left it for Paine, and his more daring followers to describe. The terrific example of France, has hitherto operated as a salutary check to the progress of the republican doctrines, but France, say the partizans of innovation, is yet in a revolutionary state, and is not, therefore, to be cited as an example of the *durable* consequences of the change which we propose. For this sort of example, say they, we must look to America, where the business of revolution is at an end, where the people are the sovereign, and the sovereign is the people; where *a written constitution, a suffrage almost universal, an elected chief magistrate, and a frequent rotation in office*, have shut the avenues to political intrigue and corruption; have filled the public counsels with wisdom and integrity; have produced an equal and prompt operation of the laws; have mended the morals, aug-

mented the happiness, and secured for ever the freedom of the people. Astonishing delusion! how fatally some of its effects have been felt by those thousands of unfortunate Britons, who have been inveigled from their competent professions and comfortable homes, to eke out a miserable existence, to perish like beggars, and be buried like dogs in America. But the sufferings of these our deluded fellow subjects, however great, however painful to contemplate, are of trifling importance, when compared to those evils, which by the same means may be finally produced in this kingdom. To put an end, therefore, to this painful delusion, appears to me to be such a necessary undertaking; an act of justice and of mercy so pressingly solicited from any and from every man, that notwithstanding the admissions of conscious inability, I venture to present myself to you as the accuser of republicanism, pledging myself to prove, by inconvertible evidence, that it has been, and that it still is, productive of every evil that can possibly be traced to political causes.

"I am not unaware of the passions and prejudices which I have to encounter. 'He that goeth about,' says the venerable Hooker, 'to persuade a multitude, *that they are not so well governed as they ought to be*, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers, because such as openly disprove supposed disorders of state, are taken for principal friends to the common benefit of all, and for men that carry singular freedom of mind. That which wanteth in the weight of their speech, is supplied by the aptness of men's minds to accept and believe it. Whereas on the other side, if we maintain things that are established, we have not only to strive with a number of heavy prejudices, deeply rooted in the hearts of men, who think that herein we save the time, and speak in favour of the present state, because we thereby either hold or seek preferment, but else to bear such exceptions, as minds, so averted beforehand, usually take against that, which they are loath should be poured into them.'

"Such, gentlemen, were the obstacles to the progress of truth two hundred years ago, such are they at this day, and

such will they ever remain. But there are some of these obstacles, which do not, I presume, present themselves to me. I neither hold nor seek preferment, nor is it at all probable that I shall ever exercise or enjoy the emoluments of any. Besides, they are not *opinions* but *facts*, which I have to lay before you. Nor shall these facts be drawn from antiquated history, the authenticity of which you might doubt, but from a state of things this moment in exercise. Again, they shall not be sought for amongst the Venetians, the Genoese, the Dutch, the Swiss, or any other outlandish race, but amongst a people descended from the same stock with yourselves, speaking the same language, having the same sober temper, the same habits, customs, and manners, and differing from you only on those points, where the revolution in their government has had an immediate effect. And as to my evidence, it shall not be such as was given at Maidstone, to the character of O'Connor, but such as was afterwards given to that character by O'Connor himself. It shall come from neither the friends nor the enemies of republicanism, but from the lips of the republicans themselves. With all these claims to your attention and belief, I will not so far disparage your wisdom or your justice, as to doubt of a verdict in my favour."

The first witness, whom Peter Porcupine calls, is Dr. Priestley, whose evidence we shall merely give in part, considering the passages to be worthy of being included amongst the "beauties of Cobbett," at the same time that they present him with the opportunity of distinctly exposing his political principles. It must, however, be admitted, that the questions which Peter puts to the learned doctor, are what are termed by lawyers, leading questions, for the answer which is given is already determined, or rather anticipated. It must, however, be stated in explanation, that Dr. Priestley wrote and published twelve letters, addressed to his neighbours, the inhabitants of Northumberland, in the State of Pennsylvania, and therefore Peter looked upon the doctor as a kind of king's evidence, from whom he was to extract a con-

fession of his own transgressions. However, Peter proceeds in his examination :

" PETER. ' Doctor Priestley, it is very well known that you crossed the Atlantic in search of *Liberty*, be, therefore, so good as to inform the jury, what has been the result of your pursuit, whether you have found things to answer your expectations, whether a written constitution is so complete a barrier as you thought it, against the abuse of power, whether the representatives of the people in America are more independent of the executive, than the parliament of England are of the king, and of such other matter as you may have gathered from experience.'

" DOCTOR PRIESTLEY. ' When I left England '—

" JURYMAN. ' Be kind enough to speak out. What are you ashamed of, man ?'

" DOCTOR PRIESTLEY. ' When I left England, (here the doctor gave a heavy sigh.) when I left England '—

" ANOTHER JURYMAN. ' Go on, man—we all know that you left England.'

" DOCTOR PRIESTLEY, ' When I left England, I was induced to come hither, chiefly on account of my high admiration of the constitution of your government. It was at that time the only one that had been drawn up with deliberation, by persons appointed for that express purpose, and solemnly accepted by the nation. It was wholly founded on *the rights of man*, and the sovereignty of the people. There were no hereditary honours or powers of any kind, and no form of religion established by law, and that great and necessary guard of liberty, the freedom of the press, was uncontrolled. To my great surprise and mortification, however, I now find that several of those articles, essential to a truly free government, have been, in my opinion, on one pretence or another, *infringed*.'

" PETER. ' Very well, doctor, you speak like an honest man ; but you said something about that invaluable blessing, the liberty of the press in what degree has it been controlled ?'

“ DOCTOR PRIESTLEY. ‘ Laws calculated to restrain the freedom of speech, and of the press, have been so constantly the resort of *arbitrary* governments, that I was astonished beyond measure to find them introduced *here*, and yet in some respects, the laws that have lately been made by Congress are more severe than those of England.’

“ PETER. ‘ Very well, sir, but notwithstanding you have been so disappointed, so surprised, so mortified, and beyond measure astonished; notwithstanding the laws restraining the freedom of speech and of the press, are more severe than those of England; notwithstanding all this, it is very possible that no evil consequences may have resulted therefrom. If the country be in a state of improvement; if political harmony prevail amongst the people, and if they be enlightened, virtuous, and pious, the government may still be good, though the *written* constitution has long ago lighted the cigars of the president and his pot companions. Be so good, therefore, as to inform the jury as to those points which go to prove the practical effects of the American government.’

“ DOCTOR PRIESTLEY. ‘ A foreigner travelling in the interior parts of this country, and finding the want of roads, bridges, and inns, wonder that things of such manifest utility should not have had more attention paid to them, when he sees that great sums are raised, and expended on objects, the use of which is at best very doubtful. Men of letters coming to this country, find their hands tied up. Books of literature cannot be had, and philosophical instruments can neither be made nor purchased. But all this may be short-sighted speculation, and it may be, nay, I doubt not it is, better for the world at large, that its progress should not be so rapid, but that a *long state of infancy, childhood, and folly, should precede that of manhood and true wisdom, and that vices are better checked by the calamities of war than by reason and philosophy.*’

“ PETER. ‘ Well, doctor, if the people be of your way of thinking, they are doubtless very indifferent about the

matter, and live in great *harmony* together. Is this the case ?

“DOCTOR PRIESTLEY. ‘A stranger is apt to wonder, that *political animosity should have got to such a height in this country*, where all men were so lately united against a common enemy, and that their enmity, which cannot be of long standing, should be as inveterate as in the oldest countries, where parties have subsisted time immemorial. But it may be the design of Providence, by this means, *to divide this widely extended country into smaller states*, which shall be at war with each other, that by their common sufferings, their common vices may be corrected, and thus lay a foundation for the solid acquisition of wisdom. Divided as the people of this country are, some in favour of France and others of England, I should not much wonder, if the decision in favour of either of them should *be the cause of a civil war*. But even the most calamitous of all events, would promote a greater agitation of men’s minds, and be a more effectual check to vice, than any other mode of discipline. Many lives, no doubt, will be lost in a *civil war*, but *men must die, and if the destruction of one generation*’——

“SEVERAL JURYMEN. ‘Eh ! what ! what does he say ?’

“DOCTOR PRIESTLEY. ‘And if the destruction of one generation be the means of producing another, which shall be wiser and better, *the good will exceed the evil*.’

“PETER. ‘Whilst I admire your *sang froid*, doctor, I utterly reject the maxims of your savage philosophy, which would calmly proceed to the destruction of a whole generation in pursuit of a speculative good. But let me ask you, if you have not found a greater degree of understanding, of piety, and of virtue in America, than you left behind you in Great Britain ?’

“DOCTOR PRIESTLEY. ‘A stranger naturally expects to find a greater *simplicity of manners*, and more *virtue* in this new country, than the old one. But a nearer acquaintance with it will convince him, that there is *less virtue*, as well as *less knowledge*, than in most of the countries in Europe.

In many parts of the United States there is also less religion. Infidelity has made great progress in Europe, but I much question whether it be not as great in America, and *either through want of knowledge or zeal, little or nothing is done by the friends of Revelation to stop the baneful torrent.*"

Peter had thus drawn from the doctor the admission, that the people of America, under a republican government, were neither better, wiser, more free, nor more enlightened, than under the old monarchical regime; but to Peter, the climax of the admissions lay in the acknowledgement, that under the republican government, infidelity had made as rapid a progress as in England, where it certainly had been much longer at work. He also adds, that little or nothing is done by the friends of Revelation, to stop the baneful torrent, and this he ascribes to *want of knowledge or want of zeal* in those friends of Revelation, but here he stops, without telling you the *cause* of this want of knowledge or of zeal in those friends of the faith. "The fact is, I believe," says Peter, "that the doctor perceived it clearly enough, but could not prevail upon himself to state it; he perceived it to lie in the want of *an established church*, against which he had for many years been talking and writing, and which, in his clerical capacity, he seems to have regarded as his devil. The confession, however, which I have drawn from the doctor, will, however, I trust, increase your reverence for that ancient and sacred establishment, which has hitherto preserved, and which is the only means of perpetuating amongst you those principles of morality and religion, which you received from your forefathers, and without which, you would soon be reduced to a level with the miserable infidels of France."

Peter now proceeds to discuss the question of the Elective Franchise, and for this purpose, he summons before the jury, a Mr. William Griffiths, who, under the signature of Eumenes, wrote a series of essays, the chief object of which was, to convince his countrymen of the necessity of calling a convention, in order to form a new constitution.

Peter proceeds to examine him. "I wish you, Mr. Grif-

fiths, to give the jury some ground of the many and great evils and abuses, which have arisen out of your present government; and to begin at the *root* of the mischief, let them hear what you have to say about *elections*, for there are a certain set of men in England and Ireland, who are mad after what they call the *elective franchise*, regarding it as an infallible cure for all sorts of political diseases.

“MR. GRIFFITHS. ‘It has ever been a matter of dispute upon the constitution, whether *females*, as well as males, are entitled to elect officers of government. A great difference exists on this point, and it has given rise to a diversity of *practice* on this head, and furnished a pretence from which many an electioneering trick has resulted. It is well known that women are rejected or admitted, just as it may suit the views of the person in direction. The *thing should be rectified*. If women are fit persons to take part in this important franchise, though excluded from other important functions, it should be so expressed in the constitution. They would then know their rights, and those rights could not be sported with to serve the wretched purpose of a party election. It is evident that women, generally, are neither by nature, nor habit, nor education, nor by their necessary condition in society, fitted to perform this duty with credit to themselves or advantage to the public. Mr. Fox, in his speech in the British House of Commons in favour of more equal suffrage, concedes the unfitness of females to share in elections. He says no instance of their participation in public suffrage in any government can be shown, and thus, this right, which many of his party hold to be a *natural* one, he denies to the fairest productions of nature.

“PETER. ‘Thus you see, gentlemen, that the harangues of your great patriot have reached across the Atlantic, and have met with contempt, where he, good credulous! soul supposed they would be received with bursts of applause. If Mr. Fox, however, would not permit females to vote at elections, he had no objection to make use of them in canvassing for votes, and it is well known that he would never have

gained his election for Westminster, if the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire had not allowed her lovely face to be kissed and slobbered over, by all the tag-rag and bob-tail of Tot-hill Fields, and the purlieus of the Almonry. It may also be perceived that Mr. Fox was not perfectly acquainted with all the governments in the world. If a reform founded upon the natural rights of mankind were to take place in England, if the elective franchise were extended 'to the fairest productions of nature,' what an alteration would ensue in the qualifications necessary in a candidate. If the spinsters and widows were to vote at elections, what an assemblage of youth and beauty, of brawn, of brass, would the Chapel of St. Stephen exhibit.' "

Peter now attempts to show the folly of universal suffrage, as exemplified in the American elections, and praying earnestly at the same time *that the system may never be introduced into England*. Thus we adduce another proof of the great inconsistency and unsteadiness of Cobbett in his political principles, for it must be remarked, that the opinions which he held on some of the great political questions of the day, at the outset of his career as a political writer, were exactly the reverse of those which he held at the close of it. When we examine the numerous articles written by him in his political register, on the advantages which would accrue to the state from the admission of universal suffrage, and contrast them with the sentiments contained in his *Trial of Republicanism*, we can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that they were written by the same person, or that they could have emanated from the same mind. In the work just alluded to, Peter calls upon Mr. Griffiths, to lay before the jury his opinion of the benefit derived in America from the admission of universal suffrage, and then calls upon the people of England to beware of *the introduction of so great a curse*. Peter accordingly puts the following question to Mr. Griffiths. "Are the evils attending your elections owing entirely to the admission of the fair sex to the *enjoyment of the rights of man*, or are there other causes, which contribute

to the rendering of this *precious* right, the greatest of *all possible curses*?

“MR. GRIFFITHS answers. ‘It is evident as the constitution is, that our elections are liable to be influenced, and indeed governed by persons, who have no interest in the welfare of the state; who have as little knowledge of the characters fit for office, and who, nine times out of ten, are the mere instruments of party *in* the state, or the agents of executing designs formed *out* of it. What a picture has our elections for six years past presented, since an inundation of foreigners has broken in upon the country. French, Irish, Dutch, and people of almost every nation, and of every description of character, have not only been admitted, but solicited to help out contending sides in elections for officers of government. In towns particularly, where such people collect, the evil is more glaring, and the improper advantage it affords over the country interest in elections, has often been complained of with great reason. In the county where I reside, there are, I venture to affirm, two hundred Irishmen employed at different works, who are never taxed *except at the whipping post*, and yet these fellows are brought to the elections, and their votes perhaps placed in equal balance against those of as many respectable and wealthy citizens.’

“Here PETER exclaims: ‘People of England, and you Mr. Erskine in particular, I beseech you to listen to what has just now been delivered by Mr. Griffiths, and such would be your fate, if you once admit universal suffrage to be the law of the land. Listen to him, Mr. Erskine; he speaks from experience; he has lived under a British and under an American government; under a monarchy and under a commonwealth; and which is still more favourable to the forming of a correct judgment by comparison; he has seen the effects of both sorts of government on the same people, living in the *same* land, and engaged in the same pursuits. He has seen a monarchical government revolutionized into a republican government; he has seen a constitution, existing in the laws, customs, and usages of England, exchanged for a con-

stitution written in a book, and at the end of twenty-three years of experience, he calls upon his countrymen to return to the maxims and regulations of their forefathers.' "

For Peter Porcupine's further sentiments on the great superiority of monarchical over a republican government, we must refer the reader to the perusal of the Trial of Republicanism, published in the works of Cobbett, as printed in America and reprinted in his newspaper called The Peter Porcupine, which he published in London. Sufficient, however, has been shown to expose the opinions of Cobbett as they were in 1799, and in 1830—5, and perhaps it would be difficult to select a political writer who showed a greater degree of apostacy, than William Cobbett. At this period the most artful and insidious measures were adopted to induce the poorer classes of this country to emigrate to America, a country represented to be flowing with milk and honey, and in which pauperism was scarcely known to exist. Cobbett was aware of the scandalous measures that were adopted to entrap the poor people of this country across the Atlantic, and which he stigmatizes as one of the mischiefs which American independence had produced in the world. He says that he could fill a volume with the names of the miserable wretches who were seduced from their native country to die with hunger and sickness in the woods and swamps of the United States. As a warning to the people of this country, Cobbett inserts in his Porcupine, a sermon preached by Dr. Priestley in Philadelphia for the benefit of the poor emigrants, but which in itself would not have been deemed worthy of notice, otherwise than that it furnishes us with an opportunity of recording the opinions of Mr. Cobbett on some of the most interesting questions of political economy.

It is well known that in the construction of the English Poor Laws, Mr. Cobbett saw a system which proved the intelligence and wisdom of the framers of them, and that they might be appealed to as the very best that could be adopted for the relief of the poor, by giving them a *legal right* to parochial relief. Dr. Priestley, however, says in his sermon

in recommending a fund to be raised for the relief of the distressed emigrants, "Not that I wish to have a fund so open to them as they should have a claim upon it as a *legal right*. That circumstance, as we see in the case of the poor in England, would soon defeat the very object of the charity. The more poor you provide for in this way, the more you will create; the more you may burden yourselves, and that without limit, and the more distress you will occasion in others. By this most injudicious system, you would only encourage idleness, improvidence, insolence, profligacy of every kind."

"In answer to the foregoing passage, Cobbett says. The English system of Poor Laws *is the best in the world*; the fairest for the giver, and the least degrading to the receiver. By this wise and humane system, those who possess the good things of this world, are compelled to assist those, who do not possess them, they are compelled to perform the *obligation* which they are under to give, they are compelled to pay the debt which they owe to the needy. And so wisely did our forefathers contrive this system, that the compulsion being general has in it nothing invidious on the one part, nor humiliating on the other. The poor man in England is as secure from beggary, as is the king upon the throne. The very worst that can befall him is to be obliged to make his distresses known to the parish officers, the heads of the great family of which he is a member, who are obliged by law to give him what he needs, which he receives not as an alms, but as a *legal right*. *No one is vested with inquisitorial powers over him*; he comes not as a suppliant for mercy or compassion, and therefore he fears no refusal. His body may be wasted with want and infirmity, but his heart is not broken by degradation. It is somewhat strange to hear Dr. Priestley express his dislike of this system, because it encourages insolence in the poor; him, who has discovered more insolence towards his superiors than perhaps any man that ever existed. There is no good without its concomitant evil, and it may be that a certain provision for the poor, does in some instances

encourage idleness, improvidence, and insolence, but how trifling is this evil, when weighed against the heart-cheering confidence which every man feels, that neither himself, nor the widow, nor the orphan that he may leave behind him, can ever want for the necessities of life, and can never be exposed to a precarious subsistence. To hear the doctor railing against English poor laws, one would imagine there were no poor laws in the United States, but to the honour of these states be it spoken, they have poor laws upon the English plan. I who have paid poor taxes in that country, am able to speak with precision on that subject, and I can prove from my receipts, that my poor rates, in the very town where the doctor was prating, were full as high as they were in London in 1801. There are poor everywhere. We read of the poor from one end of the Bible to the other. It is the lot of mankind to be subject to poverty, and as far as relates to the poor, that is the best country where poverty produces the least suffering of mind and body, and that country is Old England."

Of the miseries of emigration, Mr. Cobbett here gives a striking example, and we fear they are still exemplified in hundreds of our fellow countrymen, who are led away by false and glowing representations of interested individuals, to leave the land of their fathers to endure all the wretchedness of misery, of want, starvation, and destitution. Mr. Cobbett was himself an eye witness of the sufferings of the English emigrants, although they had not then been circulated by Mr. Johnson of St. Paul's Church Yard. This bookseller, at the time of the American Rebellion, as Cobbett styles it, was notorious for the promulgation of democratical and republican pamphlets, in which the Americans were represented as fighting against tyranny and despotism, and proving that their separation from the crown of England was a right naturally belonging to them. Of course Cobbett took every opportunity of shooting one of his quills from his Porcupine back at Mr. Johnson, but who appeared to feel the effects of them as little as Gulliver felt the arrows of the Lilliputians.

The history of the English family as related by Cobbett, is as follows: "A bricklayer, named Masters, sold off his cow, his household goods, and some other little property, amounting in the whole to about one hundred pounds, left his home, a village in Kent, and went with his wife and ten children to Philadelphia, on board the *Belvidere*, Captain Reynolds. During the passage, his wife and several of the children were ill. They were cruelly treated by the captain, who would give them nothing but the ship provisions, and who, notwithstanding the weak condition of the females, kept them all penned up in a close and unwholesome part of the vessel. The woman was even dangerously ill, and her husband besought the captain to give them a little oatmeal to make her some water gruel, which the hard-hearted republican bashaw refused, though he every day washed his own vulgar hands and visage in oatmeal and water. By mere chance, none of them died at sea. Arrived at Philadelphia, they went on shore, but in the dirty and diseased state to which they were reduced, they were thrust from every door they attempted to enter. The whole of the hundred pounds, the earnings of their lives, had been paid to the captain for their passage to the land flowing with milk and honey. Thus penniless and sick, they dragged their miserable carcasses out to the huts upon the commons, inhabited by negroes, where, after many vain solicitations, they obtained permission of a negro woman to sleep upon her earthen floor for one night. Luckily for them a journeyman, who worked for an English master, happened to go by, and was informed of their situation, which he made known to his master the following morning. This master who was an intimate friend, immediately repaired to the spot. He found them all sick and starving. He immediately took a small house and had them removed to it. The trustees of the infirmary sent a doctor to attend them. My friend set on foot a subscription. The St. George's society contributed a considerable sum, and the captain of the vessel, seeing that the poor creatures had found friends, thought it prudent to pay thirty dollars to save himself from a prosecution for his

cruelty. If I recollect right, three of the children died, and I saw the man and several of the children sick in bed some weeks after their arrival. It was by mere accident that any part of this family was preserved from death. Not that the Philadelphians are wanting in acts of humanity, on the contrary, they are very humane, but it was not their duty to maintain these interlopers, and had it been so, the people would have been dead before any parish officer would have heard of their situation. What punishment can be too severe for him, who can coolly set about exposing people to misery like this. Of all human beings the most wicked and detestable, are the land jobbers of America, and their agents in America."

Their was, however, one passage in the sermon of Dr. Priestley, having a political tendency, which excited the wrath of Cobbett, and for the promulgation of which he punishes the doctor in the following manner. The objectionable passage ran as follows:

"America is now, in a great degree, peopled by Europeans, who have formed an excellent constitution of free government, having learned by the example of the governments of Europe, what to aim at and what to avoid in their own institutions, and they are flourishing in all respects to a degree that was never known in any part of the world before. For this you are indebted to a good Providence, seconding your *virtuous* and strenuous endeavours, in your late hard, but successful struggle for liberty. Receive then with open arms, those, who at a distance, *were praying for your success, and in various ways, though not by fighting, contributing to it, and for which they now suffer; for the crime of wishing well to the liberty and independence of America, will never be forgiven by the court of Great Britain.*"

"This passage," says Cobbett, "which is composed partly of truth and partly of falsehood, requires some comment. The rebellion, the doctor styles, a virtuous struggle for liberty, and he says that the emigrants, amongst whom he certainly includes himself, were praying for its success, and

in various ways contributing to it. This is very true, but the doctor never confessed it so freely till he reached the transatlantic shore; and Mr. Johnson of St. Paul's Church Yard, has taken care never to publish the confession in England, even to the present day. But here the doctor ceases to speak truth. He says that he and his brother emigrants are now (in 1797) suffering for having prayed for, and contributed to the success of the American rebellion, *and the crime of wishing well to the liberty and independence of America will never be forgiven by the court of Great Britain.* What an atrocious falsehood! that the crime ought never to be forgiven, until the criminals have received punishment, is certain, but that any attempt, either direct or indirect, has ever been made by the court of Great Britain to punish them, is the most impudent falsehood that ever dropped from the lips or the pen of even a sectarian priest. No, on the contrary, those who wished well to the independence of America, have received but too much countenance, had it been otherwise, we should not at this day have to encounter the difficulties that surround us, and to strive against the poison that is rankling in the hearts of the nation. Had it not been for the coalition, into which Lord North suffered himself to be inveigled, we should long before this time have spoken of the abettors of the American Rebellion, in language becoming the loyal people of an injured sovereign. That many of them were deceived is most true, these would have confessed their errors, and would have been pardoned by the nation, but the traitors would have been consigned to everlasting infamy. It was that fatal coalition that drew a veil over everything; that it was which gave to rebellion the name of revolution, and to rebels the name of patriots. From that hour, as far as related to the American War, treason became a virtue, and loyalty a reproach.

"The Americans knew all this as well as the doctor, and therefore they were not to be deceived by his cant. They perceived that he made a merit of his treason, that he had come to the country with the hopes of being rewarded for it,

and though they like the treason well enough, they have given him most convincing proofs that they despise the traitor.

“Oh! the glorious triumph of justice! no, doctor, it is not the British court, nor the British nation that has brought on you your punishment, it is the unseen, the slow but certain hand of a just and over-ruling Providence, which has torn you from home and your friends, and exposed you to the reproach and derision of those very persons from whom you expected a recompense for your malicious contrivances against your king and your country.”

Mr. Cobbett now enters into a statement of the character and pretensions of the principal *émigrés*, some parts of which are drawn up with such infinite humour and such bitter sarcasm, that cannot fail to afford great amusement to every individual who may peruse them. Mr. Humphries, formerly of Birmingham, first comes in for a lash from the thong of the surly satirist. This gentleman was represented in certain English papers, to possess a beautiful seat on the Susquehanna, but Cobbett says of him, “Concerning Mr. Humphries’ beautiful seat, I have never heard a word of it, and beautiful seats are so very rare in that republican country, that I am fully persuaded, I should have heard of it, had it been in existence. Mr. Humphries, however, I know. In the winter of 1798—9, I let him have some partridges to turn out in his farm, which from that circumstance, I am sure was near Philadelphia, but it had not acquired celebrity enough for me to have heard of it or its owner, who was till that time a stranger to me. I remember I lent him some buckwheat for his partridges, and I also remember that he regretted the want of a country like England, where the winter was not so severe as to destroy the game. He was a very good man at borrowing, but as to repayment, it was a word of which he knew not the meaning, if he did, he brought it not with him to America.

“Mr. Ryland of Birmingham, and Messrs. Eddowes and Cooper, from Chester, are also located in the same district as

the foregoing gentleman. Of the two former I know no more, than that they added two to the number of fools already settled in that part of the country. Cooper was originally a lawyer; he attempted to follow that profession at Sunbury, but failed in his attempt for want of fools to trust him with their causes. He, too, solicited a place from government, which having been refused, he libelled the President. He behaved in a most brutal manner to his wife, from whom he was separated in 1798, and in the same year he was reduced to so low a state as to have his goods taken in execution and sold by the sheriff. In 1800, he was tried for a libel on the President, and was sentenced to pay a fine of four hundred dollars, and to be imprisoned for six months amongst the felons in the jail of Philadelphia. Did England lose anything by the emigration of this chap? Yes, she lost a scoundrel, and therefore her loss was a gain."

Mr. Cruger, formerly Member of Parliament for Bristol, was settled at New York, "And little," says Cobbett, "when I saw poor Cruger at New York, little did I imagine that he had ever been a member of the British Parliament, Yet I know not why I should be astonished at it. *Mr. Sheridan is a member of that body, and so was Horne Tooke.*

"Benjamin Vaughan, late member for Calne, in Wiltshire, is the person of whom the traitor, Stone, speaks in his letters to Priestley, which were intercepted in 1798, and published both in England and America. He settled at a place called Kenebeck, in the district of Maine, upwards of four hundred miles from Philadelphia, where, if he had been in 1798, he would have been *stoned* to death for his traitorous correspondence, in which he made such a conspicuous figure. At Kenebeck, he has a little land, a good deal of wood, and plenty of rock, the whole of which are covered with six feet of snow during five months in every year. From the last accounts received of him, he was in a state of perfect wretchedness, and full as discontented as ever he was in England.

"Mr. Church, late member for Wendover in Buckingham-

shire, is settled at New York. He is an Englishman; was a commissary in the rebel army of America, whence at the end of the rebellion, he returned with an American wife, and with the proceeds of his honourable employment. He got into the House of Commons, and endeavoured to wipe away the memory of his past conduct, by giving balls and routs, and liberally losing at play. The shabby gentry visited him as long as his doorway was paved with gold, but he found that he could obtain no notice, but what was dearly purchased, and he returned to America in dudgeon. His wife is the daughter of a very rich man in the State of New York, and he himself is rich, but I know that so unprofitable had been his commercial speculations after his return to America, that in 1800 he offered ten thousand dollars to any one who would take his books from the day of his landing to that time.

“ Mr. Falkner is said to be settled at Halifax in the State of Pennsylvania. There is no such place. And if Mr. Prescott, late of Bishopsgate-street, was in 1796 settled in Philadelphia, he was like Bobadil, much attached to a snug *privacy*, for I never heard of him. Mr. Falkner it seems was a speaker of much eloquence, that is, of such eloquence as distinguishes the court of common council of the city of London, and if so, he has received a mortification which must long ago have broken his heart. He found no common hall in America, no silly liverymen to shout applause at the close of his factious harangues. To a bloated, insolent city orator, I can conceive nothing more mortifying than the contempt which his pomposity must meet with from the country people of America, every individual of whom has more cunning, more sense, and more intrigue in his little finger, than the whole common council have in all their bodies and heads put together. How many times has this poor Falkner repented of his folly. How many times has he cursed the hour that he left the company of the *logs* in the Guildhall for that of the trees in America, I am certain that the man must have died of a broken heart, for your eloquence

haberdasher is ever like a bottle filled with filthy brewing, he must void or burst.

"If Mr. Cooke, well known for the calves head prosecution at Cambridge, be the same Mr. Cooke whom I knew at Philadelphia, I am able to inform his friends that the calf's head is still on his shoulders; for after building a house without money, it was taken from him by the sheriff. He paid his debts with a sponge, and is now in the State of Maryland a waiter at a hedge tavern.

"Mr. Law, I have heard of, and know him to be most heartily despised by every man with whom I have conversed respecting him. If he has trebled his fortune by speculation in the new buildings at Washington, his fortune originally must have been very small, and he must have had singular good luck, for of the other speculators in those buildings, no small proportion are in jail for debt, or have had the good fortune to be permitted to use the sponge.

"It is false that Mr. Redhead, eldest son of the late bridge-master of the city of London, is settled in the mercantile line, or any other line, in Philadelphia. So obscure was this man's situation, that I never heard of him till I saw his name in the list of the *respectable* emigrants. Upon inquiry made of a friend who lately resided in Philadelphia, I find that Redhead had a little retail shop in Philadelphia for some time, but he quitted that, and went to live on the eastern shore of the State of Maryland, where he now keeps a small retail or trucking shop, and whence he from time to time goes up to Philadelphia with feathers, musk-rat skins, and other things collected from the country people, which he exchanges for dry goods and groceries. Whom he married I know not, *but this I know, that no girl worth having was married in Philadelphia during my residence there, without my hearing of the wedding.* (A singular avowal this on the part of William Cobbett.)

"Of Mr. Hatton, who married the sister of Mrs. Siddons, I never heard, but I heard and knew too much about the English players who emigrated to America, and with the

reader's leave, I will here communicate my knowledge to him. And first, of the two managers and proprietors of the Philadelphia theatre, Wignall and Reinagle, who on the 21st March 1799, went to jail for debt. They soon came out by the insolvent act, and paid their creditors with a sponge, amongst which creditors I had the honour of being one. Fennell, well known on the English stage, has been twice in jail for debt at Philadelphia, and twice at New York, in which place he was safely lodged when I left that terrestrial paradise. Cooper, who was, I believe, also known on the English stage, and who boasts of being the son of Godwin, was confined in Philadelphia jail in the month of March, 1800. Bates, formerly on the English stage, and Darley, formerly of Vauxhall, were in jail for debt at Philadelphia in 1798, during the time that the law required them to be in prison, they were frequently brought out of jail (as Fennell had been before them,) to act on the stage; when the play was over, and they began to scent the morning air, they, like ghosts, returned to their prison house. Bates, during his confinement had actually his play benefit, for which he very aptly and very impudently chose, '*A new way to pay old debts.*' These men also sponged off a little account of mine. I have only to add with respect to the diverting vagabonds, that precisely at the time that these transactions were going on, the True Briton, (a London newspaper,) gave a high-wrought picture of the *flourishing state* of the players, who had emigrated to America, stating, in particular, the great success of Bates and Darley!

"MR. STOCK, the surgeon of Edinburgh, for whom a reward of £200 was offered, still practises his profession with great eminence at Philadelphia. So says the Observer newspaper, but the said newspaper tells a great lie. Mr. Stock does not nor ever did practise his profession at all in Philadelphia, much less did he practise it *with great eminence*. Being regarded as a traitor to his king, he was on that account received into the house of one Dallas, a British subject, and a mortal enemy of Britain. He served, and still serves

this man, who is a lawyer, in the capacity of copying clerk ; he goes on his errands, and for aught I know, blacks his shoes. In the year 1799, he endeavoured to add to his stock of linen, by writing a play, called 'The Wedding in Wales.' The play was damned, as the author had been a thousand times, by every sound-hearted man in the country, who had heard of his perfidious plan for murdering the soldiers at Edinburgh.

"ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN, who the Observer says lived in splendour at a country seat in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia, never lived in the neighbourhood of that city in his life. He purchased a miserable cotton manufactory near Wilmington, in the state of Delaware, which being *first insured*, was *accidentally* burnt to the ground, as it had been once before. It did not repeat its phoenix-like operation, and Rowan took to brewing spruce beer, a trade which is generally carried on by the free negroes. Having received remittances from his wife, he quitted his brewing business, and lived a little more at his ease, but as to country seat or town seat, he has none. While he was a brewer, I myself heard several persons say, that they saw him wheeling a barrow in Wilmington, and heard them regret that he was not chained to it for life.

"JAMES NAPPER TANDY, says the Observer, is also *settled* at Philadelphia. That he re-emigrated is well known. While he was there he was so detested, that no man of fair reputation would suffer him to enter his house. He took a small tenement out in the commons, but as soon as the owner knew the character of his tenant, he gave him notice to quit. To the great honour of the natives of America, they have uniformly expressed, and made appear the sincerity of their abhorrence of the emigrated traitors.

"HODGES, FIELD, and PARKINS, engravers, are settled at New York. Of Hodges, I know nothing. Field attempted miniature painting, but he could not draw a *likeness*, and he of course failed in that line. Mr. Parkins I also knew; his business as an engraver would yield him nothing. He took

some money with him, with which he purchased, in whole or in part, a little farm in Delaware county, in the state of Pennsylvania. Here his workmen cheated him, his neighbours trespassed on him, and some of them robbed him. He used, about once a month, to come to me with his complaints; I advised him to sell his farm, beat his neighbours, and go to England. He was too timid and too irresolute to take my advice, the consequences of which will be, that he will lose every dollar, and die of a broken heart. While I am speaking of emigrated engravers, let me ask, why so many of the English artists are not only disloyal, but are republicans, rooted malignant republicans?

"Of Mr. Weston, the surveyor, late of Gainsborough, I know nothing, but of another architect, who emigrated from England, and who is at Washington City, I do know something. This man, whose name is Laving, was in Philadelphia in 1797. He then confessed to me his political sins. 'Mr. Cobbett,' said he, 'I leave you to guess to what a length I carried my infamy, when I used to go to a public house in London, with a ream of Tom Paine's writings under my arm, and give them away at my own expense to every one that came in.' This man went to America, *carrying letters of recommendation to one of our consuls*. Laving became insolvent at Washington in 1799, and is now severely suffering for his folly and his crimes, and if the truth were known, I would venture a trifle, that Mr. Weston is at this moment suffering under the operation of the same wholesome discipline.

"I have now," says Cobbett, "put an end to these notices, by observing, that I have said nothing which I will not repeat to the face of the parties or their friends, and if there be any cruelty in thus exposing their faults, their distresses, and their disgrace, let them look to the *OBSERVER* for satisfaction. It is the proprietor of that vehicle of falsehood and malice, who has provoked the exposure. His flattering picture of the situation of the emigrants of America, was intended to alienate the affections of Englishmen from the country that

had given them birth, and from the sovereign whom God had placed over them, and commanded them to honour and to love. The notices which I have now given, are intended to counteract his nefarious purposes."

Cobbett had at this time got himself embroiled with almost all the London newspapers. There was scarcely one to which he was inclined to give a good character, or even any character at all, and if perchance, an unlucky editor should insert in his columns, any thing bordering on a panegyric of the Corsican usurper, so certain was he on the following day to be pierced all over with the quills shot from the Porcupine, some of which were sent forth with such acrimony and vengeance, that the offenders writhed for weeks and months under the virulence of their wounds. For the purpose of exposing the true character of the principal newspapers of the day, Cobbett wrote his celebrated letters, under the title of "An Author, to PRINCE POSTERITY;" and it is impossible to peruse the following letter, without being struck with admiration of the talents and genius of the writer.

TO PRINCE POSTERITY.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR SUBLIME HIGHNESS,

"Flattered as I am by the reception which my late epistle to your Sublime Highness met with, it will be little wondered at, that according to my promise, I so soon trouble you again, though perhaps it may, when these lines are perused by your highness, excite in your mind some degree of surprise, that a professed author, should be so exact in keeping his word; and I have no doubt but yourself, and those distinguished personages, who compose your illustrious court, will recollect innumerable instances of the failure of promises made by writers of every age, from the first dawn of literature to its present splendid meridian, and of every nation, which has had the supreme happiness to owe its first polish to the horn book.

"The promises of lovers, though they have frequently been said to excite the risibility of Jove, are not more fragile

than those of our *tribe*. How often do we see the frontispiece, or more properly the title of a book, pompous and lofty, sounding as the title of the great Mogul, promise like the frontispiece of an inn, 'whose *bush* is better than its wine,' entertainment for guests of every description? and yet how often do we find the negative catalogue in both, exceedingly copious. How often have we seen the author of a book, like the author of a quack medicine, promise one thing, and yet force his readers, or rather his *patients* to swallow another? And indeed how often have we known writers, after promising *every thing*, produce what must be deemed *nothing*? All this, most potent prince, you will see is digression. Yet did I not, after the fashion of the *Times*, impress upon your mind the idea of my superior merit and probity, it is possible you might not be able to discover either. I shall, therefore, after this hint, drop the subject of *SELF*, however delectable it may be to dilate upon it, either at the bar or elsewhere, and under the coercion of that rough rider Time, canter as well as I can along the road, without taking any frisk beyond the boundary of COMMON SENSE.

"I shall now without any further exordium, proceed to inform your sublime highness, of the state of our domestic, or more properly our hebdomadal or ephemeral literature, the immense advantage of which I have already celebrated, though such is my enthusiastic admiration of those energetic effusions of genius, which are daily and nightly exhibited, that I have frequently wondered where the *patriotic* authors of some prints, which are evidently written with the benevolent and pious view of supporting and comforting our enemies, 'blessing those who curse us,' I have, I say, wondered where these gentlemen caught their truly christian *inspiration*, and even now am apt to conclude, that like Milton, who with republican principles possessed nearly as much genius, they found themselves awakened every morning by a muse, and although a friend at my elbow rather suggests prostitute, or printer's devil, or dun, I, in imitation, of that truly jacobin parity of idea and chastity of style, which I admire, desis

from availing myself of these hints, fearing that they might be deemed a sinking in prose, and considered as tending to attract that notice, which true jacobins always shrink from; namely the lower rank, or as we may by a violent figure term it, *the bathos of the people*.

"This admiration of style and idea, most sublime sir, has led me deeply to reflect upon the subject, and to recollect a number of morning and evening papers, which have been born, and have deceased within my memory, which, although you have perhaps never so much as heard even the titles of them, have I can assure you sir, existed, and during that existence, have, like lamps, not only illuminated our public squares, our elegant streets, the mansions and residences of dignity and opulence, but even the courts, lanes, alleys of the metropolis, and, indeed, of this happy island.

"Here let me drop a tributary tear to the memory of a few, the companions of my youth, and from whom I derive almost all the learning I possess. The Ancient Craftsman, the Examiner, The Old Whig, Mist's Journal, Fog's Journal, The Crisis, and a number of others published before the middle of this century, you may in your coffee-house in the clouds occasionally have seen, but I am sure your highness never saw the WORLD, although it is long since *been at an end*. The glances at the ARGUS, whose hundred eyes, I have already hinted have had the cap drawn over them, never encountered yours. THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER I think married the GAZETTEER, both were in a decline at the time of their union, consequently their offspring was weak and decrepit, and the whole progeny have since departed this life. The Oracle, I can assure you, sublime sir, still continues to favour us with predictions and responses, in language clear and perspicuous as that of the Pythia, which, by the bye, not one in a thousand could understand, or the ingenious priests of Numa, whose predictions never were fulfilled. THE HERALD, hatched by the same hen, as THE MORNING POST crows sometimes in imitation of the Gallic cock, and sometimes brays in imitation of a British beast, his opposite

neighbour.* THE PUBLIC LEDGER, a production, which first attracted notice, in the form of a *nymph*, whose bosom being '*open to all parties*,' 'was influenced by none,' caused her to be charged with false delicacy. She had suffered much in her infancy, from being placed under the conduct of a gentleman, who laced her so tight, that she inclined so much to *one side*, as to become obnoxious to the censure of a reverend and honourable member of an opulent borough, a borough, flourishing as his own rhetoric, who saw and with that zeal, which he has ever displayed either in the pursuits of literature, liberty, or old clothes, endeavoured to correct this professional error. Some smart altercation ensued, in the course of which the conductor addressed *A word to the wise*. The parson as he then was, through *modesty*, for which the members of his cloth are always eminently distinguished, declined replying, and the conductor, whose works you have seen, consequently remained victorious. Of the *Telegraph* I can state nothing, and shall content myself with observing that I have always been taught to believe, that a *Telegraph* was constructed for the purpose of rapidly communicating intelligence to the most distant quarters of the empire; the *Telegraph* however of which I am speaking, so far from possessing the property of a rapid communication of information, scarcely promulgates any, which has not been known to the public for many days previously.

" We have I assure your highness upon the word of an author, and his word ought to be taken on almost every subject, particularly the liquidation of his pecuniary obligations, another paper called THE TIMES, which from the first time to the last pretends to be a *compages* of information, (authentic as the works of Diodorus Siculus, in which no one will look for authenticity at all,) wit, humour, and education, the first borrowed, the second secondhand, and the third very

* As far as their connection extends with the *British beast*, the *Herald* and the *Post* continue to *bray* most vociferously, even to the present day, and their asinine propensities are so decided in them, that no experience can eradicate them.

much on a par with that of a school-boy, who has just learned to stammer out *Propria quæ maribus, &c.* Therefore if any one should whisper to you that the TIMES are bad, or ask, did you ever see such damned stuff as the TIMES abound with, I would wish to apprise you, sir, that he must mean the age in general, and *not* the paper, whose exalted merit I am celebrating.*

"We have also, may it please your sublime highness, a newspaper under the title of the MORNING CHRONICLE, which has been termed from its intrepidity, a POLITICAL LION, but I like not the appellation.

"A lion will not hurt the true prince."

The royal beast himself has an attachment to royalty. The greatest enemies of this celebrated and truly excellent production, cannot accuse its conductors of any such attachment. The constellation of elegant authors, whose rays, through the medium of this paper, with a pure, though lambent light, illuminate the whole of the JACOBIN WORLD, whose voices are raised, whose pens are daily and nightly employed to praise and applaud that vast system, compounded of prudence, justice, wisdom, and mercy, which has been productive of such immense benefits to mankind, which has extended peace, happiness, and prosperity from the shores of the Baltic to the banks of the Nile, still continue their laudable exertions, under the direction of the learned editor, *whom I have seen.* Yes, your sublime highness, I have seen the editor of the Morning Chronicle, a happiness which your highness will never enjoy, as long as you continue to reside *above*, for he has always shown a particular predilection for *sinking*, and to what *place* he may sink at last, is a problem very easy to be solved. But in the mean time, I repeat it,

* It would thus appear that even as far back as 1801, Peter Porcupine entertained no great partiality for the TIMES, the boasted and boasting Journal of Europe, as, however, he progressed in the knowledge of that paper, he found reason to attach to it the epithet of *bloody*, and according to the present circumstances, it seems determined to maintain the character given to it to the last.

your sublime highness, I have enjoyed the supreme happiness of seeing the editor of the *MORNING CHRONICLE*. Where? you may ask; in a bookseller's shop, surrounded by a committee of gaping politicians, some of the greatest wits of the age, though not quite so *wise* as himself, for I think, and he thinks too, that he possesses twice the genius of Shakespeare. I have seen him, like Cato, giving laws to his little senate; I have frequently read his paper, crammed with the effusions of loyalty, although some fools, who know nothing about the matter, pretend to say that the loyalty ought to have been preceded by the compound *dis*. I have *sincerely* joined with him in lamentation, at any occasional ill-success on the part of the kingdom and its allies, and have with *equal* zeal, fervour, and animation, *exulted* on the depression of our enemies; I have turned to that part of it, which is dedicated to wit and humour, and have chuckled, when under the signature of Casper Hargrave, and other appellations, he has endeavoured to hold up some of the most respectable characters of the age to ridicule, and have been vexed that the arrows, which he had taken so much pains to poize with lead, have fallen short of their mark. I have seen, sir, in a late *MORNING CHRONICLE*, the columns ——— but for fear some authors of that valuable production should reply to me in the way that the celebrated Lord Rochester did, to a man that had seen many things; I shall at least, until I see how this eulogium is received, postpone the communication of my further discoveries, and conclude with repeating to you, that I am, sir, with deference and respect,

Your sublime highness'

Devoted, obedient, and humble servant,
AN AUTHOR."

It was in this way that Porcupine shot his quills at his cotemporaries, and no wonder need be excited, considering the number of enemies, which he raised up against him; that, although, to use one of his own favourite phrases he placed his back to the wall, determined resolutely to de

send himself against all the attacks of his adversaries, that ultimately they were too powerful for him, and drove him from the strong hold in which he had entrenched himself. This period, however, may be considered, in a political point of view, to have been one of the most important in the life of Cobbett. He had stoutly and staunchly defended Mr. Pitt in all his measures, and at the secession of that eminent man, (for even with all his faults, no one will rob him of the title of eminence,) he continued his support for a short time to the feeble and imbecile administration of the Addingtons. It was, however, about this time that Cobbett obtained an insight into the character of Pitt, which was by no means agreeable to him, for of all things, the vain and haughty spirit of Cobbett could not endure even the semblance of contempt from an individual, to whom he fancied that he had rendered any particular service, and particularly if that service were of a political nature. Pitt had no objection to receive from Cobbett, all the support and assistance which his gigantic talents as a writer could afford him, but as to any personal intimacy or connexion, Pitt avoided it, as if it were beneath him to hold communion with an individual of a grade in life lower than himself. The *hauteur* of Pitt was proverbial, and Cobbett should have shown that he possessed too much good sense to take umbrage at a line of conduct, which was not adopted towards himself exclusively, but generally to every one with whom the haughty premier had any thing to do. The last and grand defence of Pitt by Cobbett, and which Mr. Wyndham declared, ought to have been circulated wherever the English language and the name of Pitt were known, (and where in any part of the civilized world was the name of Pitt not known,) was made by Cobbett, on the occasion of an attack which was made upon Pitt in a French paper, called the *Clef du Cabinet des Souverains*, and said to be extracted from an *English ministerial Journal*; the passage was as follows. "One of the richest bankers in London,* has in the name of

* Notwithstanding that this attack on Mr. Pitt was so indignantly repelled by Cobbett, there was nevertheless some truth in it. The banker was Robert

his friends, offered to supply Mr. Pitt with the means of paying his debts, and living at his ease. Mr. Pitt rejected this offer with indignation, not being willing that a begging box should be carried about for him, as it had been for Charles Fox, Horne Tooke, Dr. Parr, and others." "We know not," says Cobbett, "what journal it is, from which this curious paragraph has been extracted, nor is it worth the inquiry, but it affords an opportunity to the French editor to abuse the late premier, and to tell a palpable falsehood, by asserting that he is in possession of places, which bring him in a net annual income of ten thousand pounds. A Frenchman by the by, never talks of England or Englishmen without exposing his ignorance as much as his malice."

In order, however, to understand the grounds on which Cobbett undertook this celebrated defence of the character of Mr. Pitt, and to give us an opportunity of inserting a parallel, which was drawn up by Cobbett, of the respective characters of Pitt and Fox, we will give a translation of that part of the *Clef du Cabinet des Souverains*, which so particularly roused his ire and indignation, and which ultimately vented itself in one of the most valuable effusions of his mind. As matters of record and of history, the following will be read with peculiar interest, as forming a condensed account of many transactions, which are but imperfectly known, and which so particularly relate to the public and private history of those great and celebrated men, who have shown so conspicuously in the annals of this country, and the race of which appears to be extinct.

The editor of the *Clef du Cabinet*, proceeds. "The motive which led to the fabrication of the anecdote of the payment of Pitt's debts was not so much a desire to praise Mr. Pitt as a wish to blacken his adversaries (*Non citoyen cela n'est guères*

Smith, whose services were afterwards rewarded by Pitt, with a peerage, under the title of Lord Carrington. This Robert Smith was for many years one of the members for Nottingham, but he became at length, so obnoxious to the people of that town, on account of his ultra conservatism, that we ourselves, were witness of his making his escape out of one of the windows of the Exchange, to save his life from the fury of the people.

possible, says Cobbett) Messrs. Fox and Horne Tooke, as well as Doctor Parr, by asserting that they subsist on the produce of eleemosynary contributions.* It is but just to observe in the first place, that Mr. Fox quitted the different administrations, of which he was successively a member, just as he had entered into them, if he had had the same species of disinterestedness as Mr. Pitt, it is probable that no pecuniary assistance would be offered to him. In the next place, we can affirm, that what has been called *begging*, was a contribution offered by the friends of liberty to Horne Tooke and Fox, at different epochs of parliamentary elections, when these celebrated men struggled against the court candidates; who did not want contributions from their friends, because the expenses of their elections were defrayed by the treasury; as to Doctor Parr, a man of profound erudition (*cûle stobæus passim*) and of independent character, we cannot see why he should have been named with Messrs. Fox and Horne Tooke. This anecdote proves that the ministerial writers pay no greater respect to probability than to truth."

"It is almost superfluous," says Cobbett, "to point out the gross ignorance of this scribbler, on every part of his subject. In the first place, he is ignorant that Mr. Fox had a considerable private fortune, together with the clerkship of the pells in Ireland, which was worth £3000 a year. Secondly, he is ignorant that Mr. Horne Tooke was the opponent of Mr. Fox at the Westminster election, when he uttered the most bitter sarcasms against that gentleman, and committed to the press a most striking contrast between his public and private character, and the public and private character of Mr. Pitt, which is still extant; and lastly, he either betrays gross ignorance, or else commits a wilful falsehood, when he asserts that Mr. Pitt is in possession of places to the amount of £10,000 a year.

* The French word *quête* is scarcely translatable. It applies to the custom of the old mendicant orders of the monks to beg from door to door, which was called *faire la quête*.

“ The only place which Mr. Pitt holds, as is well known, is that of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, which was given to him on the death of the late Earl of Guilford, and which does not produce more (we believe *less*) than four thousand pounds per annum, unquestionably a very inadequate compensation for the very considerable portion of his life, which he has devoted to the service of his country. An allusion to the private circumstances of an individual ought to be made with extreme delicacy and circumspection, but when such an individual is a public character, who for seventeen years has been an object of attention to the whole world, his circumstances become a matter of public concern ; the nation, over the councils of whose sovereign, he so long presided, have a deep interest in his situation, and *their* dignity and *their* character require that the man, who for so many years was honoured with their confidence, should enjoy in his retirement all the comfort which can flow from ease and affluence. It would be foolish affectation to pretend ignorance on a subject of public notoriety. It is generally known that Mr. Pitt, during his administration, contracted encumbrances, which his present limited income is wholly insufficient to remove, and that even his means of procuring the necessary enjoyments of life, must be considerably abridged by the sums required for the payment of the interest of his debts. Nor will this be a matter of surprise to any man who considers for a moment that the vast weight of public business which Mr. Pitt had upon his shoulders during his administration, at a period of unexampled exertion, must have precluded the possibility of attention to his own private affairs. His income arising from the places which he enjoyed, though considerable, was by no means more than adequate to support the dignity of a Prime Minister of England, and to defray the unavoidable expenses attendant on that elevated station. His bitterest enemies never accused him of that profusion which arises from habits of dissipation, nor even presuming to charge him with the commission of any vice. He neither frequented the

turf nor the gaming table, and the best proof of his frugal disposition is exhibited in his total exemption from encumbrances, though possessing but a small paternal income, on his entrance into office.

"Whatever the malicious ingenuity of faction may insinuate, or the immoveable confidence of party assert, posterity will not fail to acknowledge the invaluable services which Mr. Pitt rendered to his country and to Europe, at a momentous epoch, when all the demons of discord seemed to be let loose upon the world, and the fiend of anarchy threatened to establish her ebon throne on the wrecks of empires, on the ruin of institutions consecrated by the wisdom of ages, on the destruction of every tie which connects the created with the Creator, and which binds man to man, and on the utter subversion of all those feelings and principles and habits which distinguish the lord of the universe from the beasts of the forests. In a word, he stemmed the torrent of jacobinism, and rescued his country from the jaws of revolution. These are services unprecedented in their nature, as in their extent, for these will all honest men of the present age respect him, for these will posterity admire him.

"Differing as we do radically from Mr. Pitt, on the ground of his secession from the ministry, and viewing him in his present retired situation, we have had less hesitation in delivering the honest, unbiassed sentiments of an independent mind respecting him, than we should have had under different circumstances. But as anything which we can say, either of Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, will make very little impression on the mind of the French writer, whose falsehoods gave rise to these animadversions, we shall, for *his* satisfaction, present him with some few features of their respective characters drawn by the hand of a master, whom he will not suspect of partiality, because his labours have been constantly viewed with satisfaction and delight by the most strenuous admirers of the first consul of France.

WILLIAM PITT.

Virtutem ex hoo veramque laborem.

Pursuing early the painful study of the laws and constitution of his country.

Pursuing his laborious profession at the bar, and though without fortune, refusing all office from both parties in administration, though invited and courted to accept it by Mr. Fox and others.

By a choice congenial with his character, he solicited and obtained a quiet and honorable seat for the University of Cambridge, who revere and love his character; *for they know it*, having educated him.

His foes (falsely we *fear*) reproach him with the excess of sobriety and continence.

Were the charge true, from whatever cause it might spring, the example of his success would be useful to the public,

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

Fortunam ex illo.

Entered early on the turf, at gaming clubs, &c.

Introduced whilst a boy under age into Parliament, and speedily, though possessing a good fortune, to the lucrative office of a Lord of the Admiralty; in combination and confederacy with Lord North, and those men who finally persecuted and threw away America, and who by their despotic principles, unconstitutional conduct, and corrupt profusion, are the cause of all our past disgrace, and present aggravated burdens.

By daily and unremitted attendance for years at clubs, and taverns, by noise, clamour, and party violence, by intrigue, by hand bills, by haranguing mobs, and all the low arts too often attendant upon very popular elections, he obtained and struggled hard to hold a seat for Westminster.

His foes (falsely we *hope*) reproach him with the *excess* (in which alone is contained all reasonable blame,) of gaming, debauchery, &c. &c.

Were the charge true, the example of his success would be mischievous to the public, and his enjoyments at the ex-

and himself only the loser and the sufferer; not to be blamed but pitied.

His foes were most violent against him, when they had nothing but his youth to object. That same youth, which is the only excuse attempted for the acknowledged *bad conduct* of the one, is *alone held forth by the same men*, as sufficient to tarnish the *good conduct* of the other.

With virtue and public principle, he dares, as his father before him nobly declared, *to look the proudest connections of this country in the face.*

Refused to apply to himself the sinecure place of clerk of the Pells in England, of full £3000 a year, with a considerable share of patronage, but appointed Colonel Barre to it, in order to save the nation a pension of £3000 a year, formerly granted to Colonel Barre, with the concurrence of Mr. Fox, by an administration in which Mr. Pitt had no share, and in which Mr. Fox was secretary of state.

Acknowledges a voice of the

pense of others, a conduct deserving censure.

His friends plead his *youth*, bad example, and early bad connexions,* as the only excuse they can offer for his conduct during all the first years of his political life.

By every art, intrigue, and contrivance, he studies to banish from the minds of men all public motives and public principles, in exchange for party and cabal, for political and family connexions.

Sold to Mr. Jenkinson, the sinecure place of clerk of the Pells in Ireland, worth full £3000 a year, (a reversion formerly procured for him by his father, the late Lord Holland,) in order to put some ready money in his pocket.†

In connexion, and in office

* Who was the most distinguished of these bad connexions? George Prince of Wales!!!

† Cobbett here is in an error. Fox exchanged it for a pension of £1700 a year, for 31 years, because a pension for so long a term certain, was much more saleable, and more valuable than a much larger sum for an uncertain life.

people distinct from that of Parliament, and when two opposite factions, corruptly, greedily, and infamously united, to form a majority in Parliament, in order at once to overpower both king and people, he made a constitutional, honorable, and effectual appeal to that voice, without the walls of the House of Commons, and by the combined support of king and people, combined as they always should be for their mutual interests, he upholds undegraded the salutary authority of the sovereign, and maintains inviolate the constitutional rights of the people.

Pitt, though minister, and false and infamously libelled, has never employed the power of the House of Commons to punish his fellow citizens without trial, by *vote*. He would not consent, though urged to it by Mr. Fox, that the house should command the attorney general to prosecute, but maintained that it should constitutionally address the king to give his directions to his own officer; for he knows, and by his conduct acknowledges, that the House of Commons is no Court of criminal Jurisdiction, and that it can originate no criminal process, except the constitutional and regular proceedings

with Lord North's administration, he vehemently vociferates in the House of Commons, that the people have no voice, but only within the walls of St. Stephen's. He adds, who are the people? And answers, The Parliament. Out of office, and in coalition with the same Lord North, he daily harangues the mob from the hustings, and endeavours by the clamour of hired groundlings, to drown the voice and decisions of both the people and the senate.

After having been for years as one of the Lords of the Admiralty, uniformly and without a single exception, the most violent declaimer and adherent of Lord North, in the House of Commons, upon every measure and question against the liberties of the people, and especially for the power of that House to punish *ad libitum*, without any other formality or trial than a vote; he disagreed with him, and resigned his place, apparently on political and public grounds, and most grossly and personally abused him. In a few weeks, however, he returned again to Lord North's service and politics, having ob-

in Parliament by impeachment or attainder. He knows that the Attorney General has an *official* seat in the House of Lords, and that their officer and the king's, cannot be liable to any orders of the House of Commons to prosecute, without infringing at once the salutary rights and privileges of kings, lords, and commons.

tained (what was the real motive of his defection) a promotion from the Admiralty to the Board of Treasury, with an additional salary. In February 1774, he again disagreed with him, and divided the House against him, with the same motive as before, but *apparently* because Lord North would not consent, as illegally as unconstitutional, to commit the printer Woodfall to Newgate, by the vote of the House of Commons; and the next time he came into office with Lord North, instead as one of the Lords of the Treasury, we find him joint Secretary of State. Even in opposition and affecting hypocritically to be the man of the people, his arbitrary and unconstitutional principles remain in full force, and it is but lately that he pressed the House of Commons, though in vain, to exercise the power of commanding the Attorney General to prosecute a printer in their own name, and by their own assumed authority.

The author concludes his well drawn portraits with the following pithy questions: "1st. Which of them will you chuse to hang up in your cabinets, the Pitts or the Foxes? 2nd. Where on your consciences should the other be HANGED?"

Cobbett had now drawn down upon himself the hatred and vengeance of the diurnal press, and scarcely a paper appeared

in which some strong invective was not inserted either politically or personally. That he was able to defend himself cannot for a moment be doubted, and that he did defend himself with a spirit and tact, which few men but himself could have exhibited, must be admitted by all, who have carefully attended to the numerous argumentative writings which he put forth on the general subject of politics and history. Not satisfied, however, with the annoyance which he continually received from the nest of hornets that he had brought about him, he very injudiciously and impolitically exposed himself to the attack of another very numerous and influential body of people, namely the Methodists. In the machinations of these sectaries, as he styled them, he saw the gradual downfall of the established church, and the constitution of the country. The conventicles of the Methodists were in his opinion not devoted to religious purposes, but they were the rendezvous of the disaffected, of the seditionist and the traitor, where anarchy and rebellion were hatched under the semblance of methodism, and under the specious name of religion. In the warm and heated fancy of Cobbett, he saw Voltaire "that arch rebel and standard bearer of infidelity," presiding at the Methodist conventicles, supported by Frederic of Prussia, D'Alembert, Diderot, Condorcet, Weishaupt, and all the illuminati of Germany. He beheld the scenes of the first part of the reign of Charles the first again enacted in this country, and he discovered also that the enemies of our glorious constitution finding that it was invulnerable according to the ordinary method of attack, had insidiously concocted a measure, by which we were to be the blind instruments of our own destruction, on the principle, that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and that of all divisions, religious ones are always the most irreconcilable; consequently, according to Cobbett, is it with that view that the enemies of our constitution, civil and religious, labour incessantly to promote and support all schismatical institutions, of whatever description they may be, under a conviction, that if they can once effectually succeed in dividing us, there will be ulti-

mately no difficulty in overcoming us. That our enemies, as Cobbett calls them, has succeeded in dividing us in religious matters, must be manifest to the most superficial observer, but that they have succeeded in overcoming us, requires further proof than the mere doctrine of Mr. Cobbett. To his cost, however, he found that although the Methodists might be co-operating to bring about a subversion of the constitution, they were also determined to co-operate to annoy and molest the individual, who so unblushingly and falsely could have attributed to them such infamous and nefarious designs. In vain he shot his porcupine quills in return, dipped in the most rancorous venom, they appeared to fall hurtless to the ground; the hearts and souls of the Methodists appeared to be invulnerable to his attacks, whilst, on the other hand, they fell upon him in such an unmerciful manner, that he was ultimately obliged to give up the contest and cry *peccavi*. The circumstance, however, which galled and fretted him the most in this encounter was the desertion from his standard of those very people, whose cause and interests he was defending. He expected to see the members of the established church; the admirers and supporters of "our most glorious constitution," rallying round him, and granting him their powerful aid to repel the attacks of his assailants. They, however, paid him the compliment, to express it as their decided opinion, that he was fully able to contend with his opponents, single-handed, and the triumphs of his victory would be more flattering to him, in having accomplished it without the aid of a single ally. Cobbett thanked them for the extraordinary high opinion which they entertained of his prowess, and gradually retired from the ungracious contest, his admiration by no means augmented of the great and noble defenders of the church and state.

In the midst of these serious attacks on the peace, tranquillity and fortune of Mr. Cobbett, another of a momentous character now occurred, which roused him almost to desperation, and that was the peace made by Lord Hawkesbury with the French Consul. "Peace," says Cobbett, "con-

sidered in the abstract, is a blessing of such magnitude, that whenever after a long and expensive war, it is announced to a nation, no wonder that *feeling* should preclude *reflection*, and *enthusiasm* usurp the seat of *judgement*. But when the popular delirium, thus produced, is partially dispelled, and the mind can descend from the exclusive contemplation of the object, so arranged in the perfections of fancy, and calmly view it with the steady eye of sober reason, its real defects become perceptible, it is stripped of its meretricious embellishments, and is patiently submitted to the even scales of justice.

“ At no period of our history, in no war in which this country was ever engaged, did there exist such good reasons to expect such an effect from the annunciation of peace as at the close of the late eventful contest, in which the passions and prejudices of mankind had been called forth into action with peculiar energy, and extraordinary virulence. Never had the rage of party been carried to such a lamentable extent, never had the motives, the object and the end of a war, been combatted with so much violence, or been exposed to so much misrepresentation. In the animosity thus engendered, truth was perpetually lost in the labyrinth of sophistry and patriotism not unfrequently seemed intent on achieving the ruin of the country. The consequence naturally to be expected has already been produced, but the height of delirium has happily passed and reason begins once more to assert her sway.”

Still, however, there exists a manifest disposition to perpetuate the frenzy and even to assign to it the characteristic of *sanity*. We are still insulted with the monstrous assertion, that we have obtained the object of the war, and in the mad attempt to effect the amalgamation of the heterogeneous ingredients, honour and glory are associated with a peace, in which a plain understanding can descry nothing but *humiliation* and *disgrace*, and Britons are exhorted to rejoice and exult, where the true friend of his country can discover only subject for lamentation, and food for sorrow.

On the 10th October the preliminaries of peace were signed by Lord Hawkesbury, on the part of England, and Mr. Otto on the part of France, and on that day a scene was exhibited in the metropolis, "which" Cobbett says, "we never expected to have lived to witness, and having witnessed it, we care not how soon we resign our existence."

His indignation at the conclusion of the peace with the Corsican usurper, and a hundred other characters which Cobbett had at various times so lavishly bestowed upon him, may be gathered from the following remarks contained in his Porcupine newspaper, and the consequences of which were the suspension of the publication of that paper altogether.

"This strange negociation," says Cobbett, "has, during its whole progress been marked with a palpable deviation from all established rules of diplomatic proceedings. No sooner had Lord Hawkesbury been appointed to his present situation, then departing from the dignified conduct and wise policy of his predecessors, he immediately reduced his majesty's principal secretary of state to a footing of equality with a French commissary for the exchange of prisoners. This circumstance though apparently but trifling in itself, is not in reality so, when viewed in connection with all the circumstances of this negociation so widely different from every other.

"The dignity of a nation can never be deemed a matter of indifference by a wise statesman, and an adherence to established forms in politics as in law, is always an object of importance, though circumstances may certainly arise in which it may be prudent to sacrifice these points to considerations of greater consequence; yet as the dignity of a country is materially connected with its security, and as forms and substance are more closely interwoven than vulgar minds may be able to perceive, or willing to acknowledge, such sacrifices should never be made lightly, nor without a clear conviction of the existence of the necessity which can alone justify it.

"The usual mode of conducting such a negociation has

also been departed from, in the omission to appoint a particular plenipotentiary for that specific purpose, and be it observed, without any disrespect to Lord Hawkesbury, (who as a pious, moral, and good man, cannot be too highly commended), and without any depreciation of his talents, though he reduced himself to a footing of equality with the French commissary in one respect, he could not raise himself to a level with him in another. The advantage on one side was confined to rank, on the other it consisted in a decided superiority of diplomatic knowledge and experience. The event fully justified the expectation which observant minds had been led to form from this view of the subject.

“That our enemy should deviate from established forms was a matter of course, because it has been one of the leading objects of the French to ridicule as obsolete, and to subvert as hostile to their plans, all the existing forms and rules of diplomacy. It was not then a subject for wonder, that the First Consul should publish the preliminary treaty in the French newspapers, and suffer it to be transmitted in print to this country, before he condescended to send the official ratification of it to his majesty’s Secretary of State. All this was *consistent in him*.

“These arrangements being ultimately made in the true parisian style, Citizen Lauriston, a republican general, and first aide-de-camp to Buonaparte, was despatched with the ratification. He arrived in town on Saturday the 10th October. Here the scene of disgrace, which to the latest hour of our existence we shall deplore, began; a vile, degraded rabble, miscalled Britons, took the horses out of the carriage, which contained the two French citizens, Otto and Lauriston, the latter of whom they mistook for the brother of Buonaparte, and dragged it from Oxford-street to Downing-street, then back through the park, and not content with taking the usual carriage road, dragged it through the *mall*, a place appropriated, exclusively as a carriage road for the royal family.”

The latter circumstance was, indeed, bitter wormwood to

Cobbett. It was past endurance that a French citizen should pollute the road which the royal family of this country, (God save the mark !) are permitted by the people to keep exclusively to themselves. He thus lachrymates on the subject :

" Our readers, who have the hearts of Britons beating in their bosoms, will easily anticipate our feelings on the subject, and as easily admit the inadequacy of the language to supply terms of sufficient force to express them. Such a degradation of character, such an abominable insult to every loyal subject, were never before witnessed in this country. *Odi grecam urbem.*

Forgive my passion on a theme like this,
I cannot bear a *French metropolis.*

We would ask those, who are disposed to treat this matter lightly, if any such there be, who seek to represent it as a momentary ebullition of joy for the restoration of peace, whether at the close of any former war, at the peace of 1783 for instance, which might, for obvious reasons, have been supposed to interest the feelings of the people in a more than usual degree, as it put an end to what was considered a kind of civil war, any such eagerness to salute the messenger who brought the grateful news, was evinced ? Or can they produce a single example from history, since the days of the revolution in 1688, of a *Frenchman* being so treated by a British populace ? Are they to be told, too, that the anti-gallican spirit previously to the year 1789, was so strongly implanted in the bosoms of the people of Britain, that it was almost unsafe for a Frenchman to walk through the streets of London in times of peace, much more in time of war ? Without then, this feeling had been wholly eradicated, and what powerful cause could have produced such an effect, it is evident that the disgraceful scene which was exhibited in this metropolis could not have taken place.

" We shall not be suspected of a wish to justify national *antipathies*, but when it is considered what the people were, and what the nation *was* during the prevalence of such feeling, and what *they* and *it* are now, it may safely be averred

that the man who can rejoice in its annihilation can be no friend to Great Britain."

The illumination which took place on the occasion of the peace elicited from Cobbett one of those manifestations of opinion, from which he was unfortunately never withheld by any considerations of prudence or expediency, or even by common attention to his immediate interests. Amidst the blaze of light which testified the universal joy at the return of peace, the house of Cobbett was shrouded in the most anti-pacific darkness. The mob, who on all such occasions, when a licence appears to be taken to commit every species of aggression which they may take it into their heads to perform, paraded the streets, and issued their mandate for lighting up, which, if not instantly obeyed, was promptly followed by the destruction of the windows. They assembled before Cobbett's house, and demanded that it should be illuminated. With that stubbornness, however, which was a striking feature in his character, he refused to yield to the command, preferring the destruction of his windows to the surrender of his independence. Unfortunately for him, it happened that the house contiguous to his was under repair, and a large pile of bricks was collected in the street. This afforded a ready supply of ammunition to the mob, already excited to the commission of any acts of mischief, and in a short time the house of Cobbett underwent a regular siege, not a window being left entire. The following is Cobbett's own account of the transaction, and it may be justly characterized as a mixture of surliness and affection, for which he was so conspicuous.

"In the same degree that I perceived the illumination was to be compulsory, I became resolute not to submit to the degradation, and therefore it was with great mortification that on the very evening before the proclamation, I saw my wife actually confined in that situation, which above all others, requires comfort and tranquillity. I wrote immediately to Lord 'elham, informed him of this untoward circumstance, but at the same time expressed my resolution not to illuminate my

house. His lordship, with a condescension which I shall ever remember with gratitude, assured me that he had given orders to Sir Richard Ford, to protect from violence myself, my family, and my premises, and if such violence was not opposed with as complete success as I could wish, no fault is, I am fully persuaded, to be attributed to the magistrates or officers charged with the execution of his lordship's orders.

"On Thursday about noon, I began to grow apprehensive of the consequences of resistance. To hazard the life of her, who had been my companion and my support through all the storms I had endured, to whose gentleness, prudence, and fortitude, I owed whatever I enjoyed of pleasure, of fortune, or of reputation; to make this sacrifice was no longer to be thought of, and I had made up my mind to yield, when she bravely determined to be removed to the house of a friend rather than her husband should submit to the mandates of a base and hireling mob. This removal had not taken place many hours, before I had reason to congratulate myself upon it. A numerous and boisterous rabble, coming from Cockspur street began to assault the house at about half-past nine o'clock. Mr. Graham, one of the Bow-street magistrates, with his officers used their utmost exertions to prevent violence but in vain. The attack continued with more or less fury for about an hour and a half, during which time, a party of horse-guards were called in to the aid of the civil power. Great part of the windows were broken; the sash frames of the ground floor almost entirely destroyed, the pannels of the window shutters were dashed in, the window frames broken in several places, the door nearly forced open, and much other damage done to several parts of the house.

"I imagined that it was the characteristic of British liberty, to confer on every man the right of acting as he pleases, so long as he pays a perfect obedience to the laws of the realm, and to be protected in the free exercise of that right, *that* will become the subject of more serious and solemn discussion in another place. I did not think there existed in the country any force whatever, to compel any one of his majesty's sub-

jects to exhibit at night manifestations of joy at an event, which in the morning he had stated his reasons for believing to be a subject of deep concern. But I have unfortunately found myself mistaken, and I am, therefore, under the necessity of apprising my readers, that until the principles of the British constitution and the laws of the realm, which have ever been the objects of my fervent admiration, and my most zealous support, can rise superior to the destructive rage of a senseless and infuriate rabble; until I can derive that protection from the police of the country, which every subject has a right to claim, but which, hitherto I have been unable to obtain, until in short, that *tumult* of exultation, and 'that delirium of joy,' which a ministerial writer so emphatically described, and so earnestly wished might *increase*, shall have subsided, the publication of the Porcupine will cease, and the mob be left to *exercise* their vengeance on an empty office. How many days we shall have to repose from our labours, we know not, it depends not on *us*, we hope for the honour of our country, the interval will be short. The moment it shall have passed, we shall resume our labours with added energy and renovated vigour.

"Ignorance or malevolence, or both united, have accused us of being adverse to peace from motives of interest. We hold in equal contempt the charge itself and those who prefer it, but for the satisfaction of our readers, we will assure them that the very reverse is the fact, and that had we consulted interest alone, we should have joined those, who wished for peace *on any terms*. On the very first day, it saved us in a single transaction of insurance, no less a sum than seventy guineas, being the difference between a war and a peace risk. All the persons connected with the Porcupine paper, too, are in that class of life, who feel the necessary burdens of war more than any other. And without vanity we can assert, that none of our fellow subjects are more capable of enjoying the sweets of peace, the calm comforts of domestic life, the *ju-cunda oblivio vitæ*, than ourselves. Patriotism and principle then have prevailed over interest and inclination, in the part

which we have taken, honestly, consistently, and conscientiously on the question of peace."

Mr. Cobbett was severely censured by all parties for the line of conduct which he adopted, in refusing to illuminate his house, which for the sake of the peace of the metropolis he ought to have done, without yielding as he did to a dogged stubbornness of character, which in many instances, so far from it being the evidence of a noble and unbending spirit, in the defence or maintenance of a particular cause, is too often a direct proof of folly and arrogance. To the conduct of Mr. Cobbett was attributed, and perhaps not erroneously, much of the mischief which was afterwards done by the mob, who appeared like so many bloodhounds, which having once tasted blood, know no bounds to their rapacity and brutality.

Cobbett, however, defends his conduct, *on principle*, in the following manner:

"When we resolved to abstain from every semblance of participation in a satisfaction, which we did not feel, in a joy which was foreign from our hearts, we were not influenced by the smallest desire to repress the exultation of our fellow subjects, still less by a ridiculous affectation of singularity, equally unworthy of ourselves, and of the cause which we support, but by the potent consideration of the necessity to preserve that consistency of character, without the possession of which, a public writer can have no claim to the confidence he solicits, or to the protection which he needs. A private individual, who has no *public* character to support, may with propriety yield to the torrent, and subject himself to the imputation of openly approving what he secretly condemns. But the man, who aspires to the honour of attracting the attention and influencing the opinions of others, must be actuated by different motives, and submit his conduct to the guidance of a different principle. His judgment must never be biassed by the prejudices of the multitude; his actions never be swayed by their example; his ease and comfort never be consulted at the expense of his consistency; he must never be seduced by persuasions, allured by promises, nor intimi-

dated by threats, to swerve in the smallest degree from the straight line of duty.

*Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solida.*

*No civic furies joy command
With threatening looks and bloody hand, }
When dangers press his native land,
His actions sway, his mind control,
Or shake the steady purpose of his soul.*

It is not to be expected that these sentiments will be duly appreciated by the herd of our opponents, and it is certain that they, who do not immediately feel their force, would not be convinced of their justice by all the arguments, which might easily be adduced in support of them.

"We hate a mob, however composed, as the source of anarchy, and the fountain of discord, and we will on all occasions resist its mandates, repel its violence, and withstand its pretensions, with the same energy and decision as we have displayed, and ever shall display, in defence of the established prerogatives of the crown, the constitutional rights of the people and the laws of the realm, which are equally the safeguard and protection of both. It is our object as it should be the object of every subject, to defend *the people* of Britain against the populace. Wherever there exists a power superior to the law, whether vested in one or in many, there tyranny must prevail, and that such power does exist, when either the mandates of a mob, or the decrees of a despot, can silence or control the statutes of the realm, no man will be weak enough to deny. If it be contended that the operation of the law should be suspended to the injury of individuals, in order to prevent the imposition of an unseasonable check in a general expression of joy, we shall peremptorily deny the existence of any power in the state to authorise any such suspension. Besides, the admission of the principle would be fatal to the constitution of the country. On the

same plea too, it would be easy to justify the introduction of the Roman Saturnalia, or any of the numerous *civic festivals*, which characterize the era of the new philosophy. Fortunately for Britain, the law is here *imperative* upon all; it is the polar star, which guides alike the sovereign and the subject in their respective ways, and it is the only power, which bears the stamp of Omnipotence in a free country, that stamp which Blackstone has falsely imputed to a British parliament. It is our greatest consolation, that by our conduct during the prevalence of the late tumult, we have completely established the adequacy of the law for the protection of the subject. No sooner did it stretch forth its hand, than the *tide of popular fury* was checked, her influence controlled, and the destructive effects averted. Why that hand was not *sooner* stretched forth, will probably become the subject of a future inquiry before a competent tribunal, where the question will meet with that calm and serious investigation, which its importance, considered on public grounds, and on no other shall it be considered, undoubtedly deserves.

"We were reduced to the unpleasant alternative of either exposing ourselves to the contempt of our friends, and the reproach of our conscience, by yielding to popular violence, or to assert the rights of a British subject by resisting it. Our choice was speedily made. Another alternative then presented itself, either to defend our property by repelling force by force, and so exposing the lives of all the persons in our employ, who to their honour be it spoken, volunteered their services on the occasion, or else to seek protection from the laws of our country. *Spirit* and *temper* dictated the former mode of proceeding, but *judgment*, *prudence*, and *principle*, soon decided in favour of the latter, whether the decision was right or wrong, it must be left to an impartial public to determine."

By the spirit and activity of the police, six of the ringleaders of the mob, or as Mr. Cobbett styles them, six of the *villains* were apprehended, namely, CHARLES BELOE (son of the Reverend W. Beloe,) a clerk in the General Post Office,

CHARLES WAGSTAFF, another clerk of the General Post Office, JOHN HARWOOD, a sort of amanuensis to the Reverend W. Beloe, JOHN PARNELL, an excise officer, Samuel Wise, a servant to a brush-maker, at Aldgate; WILLIAM HARVEY, nothing at all.

Three of the parties, namely Charles Beloe, Charles Wagstaff, and John Harwood, were on the 14th July 1802, tried on an indictment for riotously and tumultuously assembling with divers other persons on the night of the 29th of April last, before the house of Mr. Cobbett, in Pall Mall, and breaking the windows. Evidence as to the alleged fact being heard on one side, and the evidence as to character on the other, which was highly in favour of the prisoners, by gentlemen of the highest respectability, Mr. Conant, who was the chairman on the bench, summed up, and concluded by telling the jury, that they were not to take into their consideration, the general character or conduct of either of the parties. That, however excellent the life and conversation of the prisoners might be, they were answerable for their transgressions of the law; he, however, closed his charge to the jury by observing, that however *wantonly* and *perversely* the prosecutor might have exposed himself, he was still entitled to the protection of the law.

The jury, after five minutes consultation, gave their verdict of guilty against all the prisoners, but recommended them to the mercy of the court. Mr. Silvester, the counsel for the prisoners, then asked Mr. Cobbett, if he would join in the recommendation. To which the latter bluntly replied, certainly not, sir, I came here to ask for *justice* and not for *mercy*.

The court, in consideration of the premature imprisonment which the youthful, but not vicious prisoners had undergone, under the aggravated apprehension of a capital prosecution, awarded no further imprisonment; but Mr. Beloe and Mr. Wagstaff were sentenced each to pay a fine of £30, and Harwood, who had not been so active, £10, the friends of all to give security for their good behaviour for two years.

In the mean time the acrimony of Cobbett towards France and all that was French, manifested itself on every possible occasion. Buonaparte, as the first consul was his most favourite object on whom to dart his venomd quills; and in England, those characters who espoused his cause, or who could discover in him a single virtue, were certain of having a few quills driven into them from the infuriated animal, who was now kept in such a continual state of excitement, that he frequently shot his quills at random, and frequently wounded a friend, when he intended to destroy an enemy. The following may be taken as a fair specimen of the manner in which Cobbett treated the consul and his partizans.

"We request our readers to observe, that henceforth we shall be *very* particular in what we say about the most illustrious sovereign, consul Buonaparte. Oh! how we shall extol him! We shall endeavour to give our readers the earliest information when he rises, breakfasts, dines, sups, and spits. With all reverence we shall treat of his *lovely, chaste, and bonny* queen, thus, by way of a touch:

"It is with superlative pleasure that we inform our readers, that the last news from France represents the health of the first consul to be improving. This glory of the world is returned to his country palace of Malmaison.

"Citizen Otto having held a public levee yesterday. when the tri-coloured flag was displayed over the door of his hotel, agreeably to the *liberal spirit*, and justly emblematic of the tripartite convention concluded between the French republic, the empire of Germany, and the kingdom of Great Britain; a number of persons of high distinction attended, the most prominent characters, which we distinguished in the civic circle, were those who have most displayed their zeal in the cause of genuine liberty, citizens Thelwall, Gale Jones, and Godwin, the most profound and illustrious philosopher of modern times, were remarkable for the elegance of their dress. After the levee was over, the truly patriotic proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle* had a private audience with the citizen minister, which lasted an hour and a half, when they

went to dine at the whig club, at which *pease* (*peace*) soup was the standing dish. Sir Francis Burdett was confined with a flatulent disorder, arising from having eaten too much of *pease* pudding. The disease is likely to continue upon him for some time.

"CITIZEN HOLCROFT is appointed to the office of *civil* consul to the British people, being generally celebrated by all who know him, for his extreme *civility*. He is specifically charged with the superintendence of all French citizens, who now are, or who may be hereafter resident in this country, and more especially to take care that no infringement is made on their liberties, incompatible with the secret articles of the convention concluded between the two countries.

"Mr. Erskine delivered a most animated speech in the House of Commons, on the causes and consequences of the late war, which lasted 13 hours 18 minutes and a second, by Mr. John Nicholl's stop watch; Mr. E. closed his speech, with a dignified climax, "*I was born free, and by G—d I'll remain so,*" A loud cry of hear, hear, from the gallery, in which were Citizens Tallien and Barrere. On Monday three weeks we shall have the extreme satisfaction of laying before the public, a brief analysis of the above speech, our letter founder having entered into an engagement to furnish us with a new fount of capital *Is* by that time.

"Interest is making by the French minister to procure the appointment of poet laureat for Peter Pindar, Esquire, and it appears certain that Citizen Camus will be appointed commissioner of bankrupts. Mr. Aris, the governor of Cold Bath Fields Prison, is understood to be the successful candidate for the office of governor of the Bastile, lately erected on the site of the *ci-devant* palace of Versailles. We are happy to see this reciprocity of amicability subsisting between the two great nations.

"Mr. Horne Tooke succeeds Lord Malmesbury as ambassador to Paris. Yesterday John Reeves, Esquire, John Bowles, Esquire, Grenville Penn, Esquire, John Gifford, Esquire, Henry Redhead Yorke, Esquire, Sir Francis d'Iver-

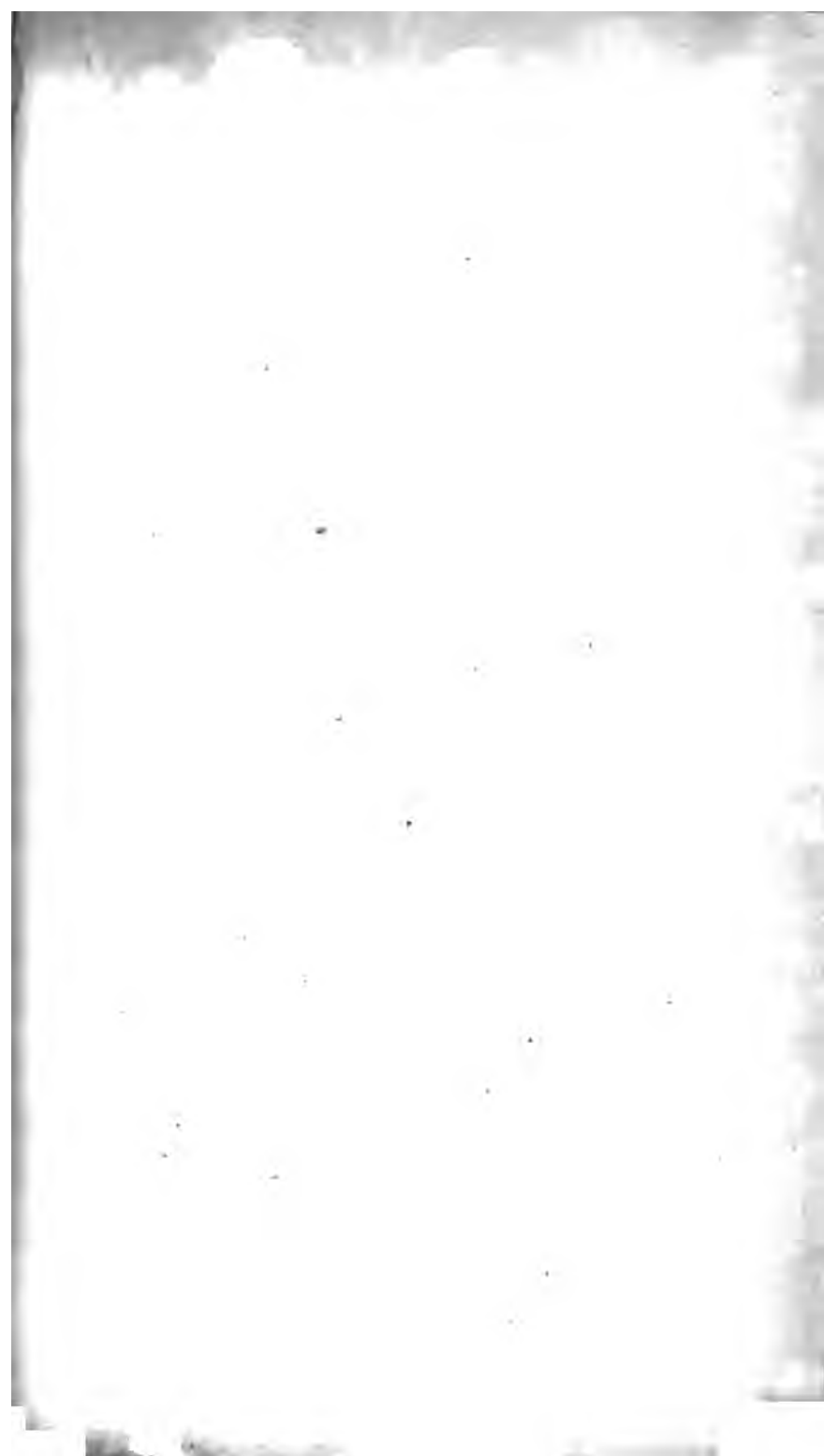
nois, and William Cobbett, were conducted under a strong escort to the Tower, on a charge of conspiring to bring the first consul of France and his government into contempt.

"Madame Tallien sat last night in the stage box of Drury Lane Theatre, and attracted universal admiration. Her dress was a book muslin, which sat close to her body, except on her left arm and breast, which were totally exposed. The whole had a charming effect, *and created a great sensation.*"

It was thus that this merciless satirist lashed his political opponents, and in truth it may be said that many of them declined all attempts at retaliation, on the principle, it was supposed, that they were fully satisfied with the thrashing which they had already received, and felt no inclination to run the risk of receiving a repetition of it.

The publication of the Porcupine newspaper was suspended in consequence of the damage done to the premises in Pall Mall, but the suspension was not of long duration, as it re-appeared on the Thursday following, with the additional title of the Anti-Gallican Monitor. In this paper Cobbett addressed a series of letters to Lord Hawkesbury, on the peace of Amiens, which produced not only a great sensation in this country, but all over the continent. So high was the character of these letters estimated in Germany, that the celebrated Swiss historian Müller, characterized them as being more eloquent and energetic, than any thing which had appeared since the days of Demosthenes. Strong, however, and consistent as had been the sanction which Cobbett gave to the administration of Pitt, and also to the commencement of the administration of the Addingtons, equally determined and violent did he become in his subsequent opposition. Though not an aspiring nor an ambitious man, yet Cobbett saw that his humble origin was a great drawback to his reception in those circles, by a communication with which his plans could be more easily and effectually brought into operation. He became satiated with the flattery of his purse-proud friends, which he saw was only bestowed upon him, to serve their own immediate purposes, and to entangle him in a snare

from which he would find it difficult to extricate himself. In a short time, he became the stern, the uncompromising opponent of the Addington administration ; but that, which it was supposed, he performed from principle, had some private, selfish motive lurking at the bottom, which few or any could distinguish. It may indeed be affirmed, that Cobbett was opposed to many of the measures of administration upon *principle*, and his opposition was based upon and strengthened by the wrongs, which he fancied that he had suffered under their rule. His natural temperament, his rooted prejudices, and above all his unconquerable antipathies, were in themselves sufficient to render him the opponent of an administration, conducted on such a system of imbecility and supineness, which was the predominant feature of the Addington government. The whole system was one of compromise, of temporising with the best interests of the state, and of crouching servilely to a late enemy, who knew how to take every advantage of it, and to turn our own weakness into the means of increasing and consolidating his own power. Cobbett could not endure to see the British lion bearded in his very den, and above all by a man, in whom according to his opinion, was centred all that was base, treacherous, and tyrannical, by which any former ruler of an empire might have distinguished himself. The administration of Addington was a direct vacillation between the two great conflicting parties, and it was impossible that Cobbett could give in his adherence to a system of government of that nature. Through the whole career of his extraordinary life, through all the changes, and apparently, inconsistencies of his political conduct, he was for the time being a desirable individual to have as a friend, but where he gave his opposition, he was a most determined and powerful opponent. He never had recourse to the subterfuges and evasions of the special pleader, nor to the fickle and wavering sentiments of an undigested judgment. Whatever his opinions were, he boldly and unhesitatingly expressed, indifferent as to whom he might offend, or in whose good favour he might establish himself. Con-





EARL GREY.

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ciliation, in matters of opinion, was a word, of which he knew not the signification, nor did he qualify his opposition, by a partial adherence to the judgement and opinions of another. He knew no medium, it was either a determined opposition, or a warm and enthusiastic espousal of the question which was before him. His chief characteristic was a stern inflexibility, a stubborn, immoveable adherence to the principles which for the time influenced his conduct. He gave no quarter to his adversaries, nor could he ever be brought to flatter his friends.

It was on the 16th January 1802, that Cobbett commenced the publication of his Political Register, a work, which for sagacity of reasoning, political knowledge, and uncompromising hostility against the ruling powers, has not its equal in the literature of any country; and in the first number he thus lays before his readers, the cause of his relinquishing the Porcupine newspaper, and the manner in which it was his intention to conduct his new work.

Cobbett commences his Register with the following observations :

" I presume that most of the gentlemen, into whose hands this will fall, are already informed that I was some months ago the proprietor and conductor of the Porcupine, a daily paper, which I established in 1800, and which, after passing into other hands, has been joined with the paper called the True Briton. The remonstrances which, from all parts of the kingdom, I have received, since the tone and sentiments of the Porcupine began to change, and more particularly since its junction with the True Briton, point out to me the necessity of explaining on this occasion the circumstances attending a transfer, in which my character as a public writer appears to be somewhat concerned.

" I came to England with the intention of confining myself to the business of bookselling, having already undergone a three years slavery as conductor of a daily newspaper. But those tradesmen with whom I consulted on my arrival, strongly recommended me to begin a daily paper here, where

talents were to be found in such abundance, and on such moderate terms, that I should find myself totally relieved from the weight with which a similar establishment pressed me in America. Encouraged by this flattering view of the prospect, to hope that a newspaper would not materially interfere with the bookselling trade, which I had previously agreed to enter into with my present partner, and stimulated by the desire of still contributing something towards the support of a cause, in which I had so long been a zealous labourer, I established the Porcupine. But to my great mortification, I very soon found, that the labour of conducting a daily newspaper in London, was infinitely greater than that attached to a like task in America, and as to a *participation* in this labour, I found that this was not to be purchased with money. To devote my whole time to it entirely was incompatible with my engagements to my partner, and therefore I was compelled to abandon the undertaking.

“ My resolution, however, to adopt this measure, having been communicated to a gentleman, who lamented that the paper should be discontinued, he generously offered to take upon himself both the labour and the risk of the concern. A legal transfer was, however, from mere want of time, postponed till that gentleman, from the untoward aspect of public affairs, was also induced to wish for a release from the public responsibility, which he had assumed. The property then became his, and from him it passed on the 23rd November into the hands of those gentlemen who have since put it into a stock of partnership with Mr. Hariot, the proprietor of the True Briton.

“ This junction having brought me numerous and urgent requests to resume, in some way or other, those labours which, though the importance of them have been certainly greatly over-rated by my friends, I hope may yet in some degree contribute to the preserving of those ancient and holy institutions, those unsophisticated morals and natural manners, that well-tempered love of regulated liberty, and that just sense of public honour, on the preservation of which our

national happiness and independence so essentially depend, I have determined on the undertaking the present publication, which, while it will demand no more of my time, than I can conveniently set aside from my more important private concerns, is, I am persuaded, much better calculated than a daily paper to answer all the purposes I have in view."

In regard to the political principles by which the Register was to be distinguished, the following extract from one of Cobbett's letters to Mr. Addington will fully disclose.

"Having mentioned this work, (the Register) give me leave to observe before hand, that I have no intention to range myself in a systematic *opposition* to his majesty's ministers, or to their measures. Such an opposition I disclaim. The first object which I have invariably had in view, is to contribute my mite towards the support of the authority of that sovereign, whom God has commanded me to honour and obey, and as the means most likely to effect this object, I have generally endeavoured to support the measures of those who have been appointed to exercise that authority. If, therefore, I do now, or shall in future, openly disapprove of *some* of the measures of his majesty's present servants, religiously abstaining from every act and word tending to weaken the government, and exerting all my feeble efforts to defend it against its enemies, foreign and domestic; I trust that you yourself, if I should happen at all to attract your notice, will have the justice to acquit me of inconsistency of conduct."

The first number of the Register was given away, that is, it was sent *gratis* to all the leading political characters of the day, to all the coffee-houses and other places of resort for political disquisition, and afterwards it was sold for ten pence, at which price it remained for a considerable time. It would be impossible within our confined limits to give even a thousandth part of the extraordinary papers, which at times appeared in this celebrated work. The period itself was one of the deepest import to Britain. A man unparalleled in diplomatic intrigue, boundless in his ambition, and reckless

of the means by which that ambition was gratified, then ruled over the destinies of France. The Peace of Amiens, which had been entered into with him, was soon ascertained to be nothing more than a hollow truce; the preliminary treaty had indeed been signed by the high contracting parties, but the definitive treaty was for a considerable time withheld, to the wonder and surprise of the people of this country, and to no one more so than to Mr. Cobbett. There was, however, one article in the treaty, which gave him the greatest offence, and this was an acknowledgement by Great Britain of the **REPUBLIC** of the Seven Islands. The very name of a republic was sufficient to rouse the acerbity of Cobbett's temper to the utmost, and above all, to acknowledge a republic of Buonaparte's making, was the very acme of infamy on the part of Lord Hawkesbury, and the imbecile, sanctified Addington. On this subject, it is impossible to peruse the caustic and pungent sarcasms inserted in the Register, without feeling admiration for the talents of the individual from whose head they emanated, at the same time; that the articles themselves stamped a celebrity on the Register, which in a short period rendered it one of the most popular productions of the day.

"Thus," says Cobbett, "when the definitive treaty comes to a conclusion, it is not improbable that the very names and situations of these islands may be specifically adjusted. In the mean time, it is surely sufficient for any reasonable man to be apprised, that Great Britain balances her cessions of every thing to France, and of almost everything to Spain and Holland; her evacuation of Egypt and Malta; her losses of territory and trade, and her apprehension of republican principles, by the establishment, in some part or other of the known world, of a **REPUBLIC** to consist of seven islands.

"The question in this state is capable of being considered in three distinct points of view, *geographical*, *arithmetical*, and *political*, and in all of them we shall have occasion to admire, more than sufficiently, the wisdom, foresight, temper, and magnanimity of those who have brought this negotiation to so happy an issue.

"If we begin by putting aside for the present the political part of this consideration, the acknowledgment which we require from France, is no more than that of the *existence of seven islands*, certainly not a very harsh demand, nor obviously in itself a very advantageous concession, but he must be very ignorant or very presumptuous, who should assert it to be wholly unimportant.

"The most remote and complicated deductions of science have their origin in demands and concessions, apparently as little capable of being disputed. It is the concession itself, and not the thing conceded that we are to value.

"Mr. Talleyrand's addition of *united islands*, appears to have been a concession beyond what was required, and was no doubt intended by that quaint statesman, as a humorous allusion to the late union in the British empire.

"It is very properly omitted in the English translation, the accuracy of our foreign office having presently discovered, that to unite islands as islands (however as kingdoms and states it may be practicable) would be in some measure to detract from that insular character, which in all ages of the world islands appear to have maintained, and which it must be the first object of a British minister to transmit unimpaired to posterity.

"I next come to the *arithmetical* part of the question.

"No man who is acquainted with the power of numbers, but must be aware that in the number SEVEN there is a mystery of high antiquity and deep reverence, that seven has been remarkable for its operations in the physical and moral world, ever since the Creation.

"There are SEVEN colours in the rainbow, SEVEN notes in music, and SEVEN deadly sins. There used to be SEVEN days in the week, (and it is whispered that there is a secret article to restore them.) There are still no more than SEVEN planets, unless, as is confidently reported in the ministerial circles, the National Institute has been persuaded to acknowledge the *Georgium Sidus*.

"There had been SEVEN *plagues of Egypt*, when the

French got possession of it. We knew of but *SEVEN wonders of the world*, up to the formation of the present administration. There were *SEVEN wise men* before Mr. Addington, and only *SEVEN champions of christendom*, until Lord Hawkesbury, by negotiating the present treaty, entitled himself to be reckoned as the *EIGHTH*.

“Goliath had *SEVEN fingers on each hand*, and *SEVEN* toes on each foot, which I will omit to enumerate, because I will fairly own I do not see their application to the present question. And from motives of greater delicacy I pass over the *SEVEN* senses, out of which people are vulgarly said to be frightened, when they prostrate themselves at the feet of a gigantic enemy.

“It is plain from this deduction, that if numbers were to enter for any thing into our consideration, a number could not easily have been selected more likely to be productive of the happiest consequences.

“It has been suggested, indeed, that with this determined predilection for a state consisting of *SEVEN* parts, it is surprising that we should have overlooked one that was ready made to our hands, and that instead of setting about the creation and confirmation of a republic, that nobody ever heard of, we did not turn our thoughts and endeavours to secure the independence of the Seven United Provinces.

“But I will honestly confess, I do not see the same objection to a demand, which I think might have been ventured without offence, that of the acknowledgment of the independence of the *SEVEN DIALS*, which, if granted, might have been attended with obvious benefit; for when a French ambassador has once taken up his residence in this capital, would it be a trifling advantage to have established some privileged place, without the verge of his court, some sequestered spot into which his writ would not run, where those, who chanced to be disagreeable to him, might retire out of the reach of his displeasure?

“It remains to consider the subject in a political point of view, and here the question of where this republic of Seven

Islands is to be found? does properly force itself upon our consideration.

"I confess, sir, that I was for a considerable time embarrassed by this question, and the more so as I saw a perverse and determined endeavour on the part of the ill disposed, to represent these islands, the political existence of which, Great Britain had sacrificed so much to ascertain, as territories of which the natural existence was hardly known or worth knowing. Even amongst the friends of ministers, the most erroneous notions prevailed upon the subject. Need I remind you of the distich which was emblazoned in the illuminations of one of the public offices, on the night of the celebration of the preliminaries:

"What surprising advantages we have obtained in negotiation over Mr. Otto,
We give up nothing but all our conquests and make him acknowledge *Cerigo*
[and also *Cerigotto*,"

The couplet you will observe is somewhat too luxuriant, which is to be attributed rather to the political delirium that prevailed so generally at the moment, than to any poetical phrenzy peculiar to the writer.

"But is not the insinuation here plainly conveyed, that the islands acknowledged by Mr. Otto, are no other than the *current* islands, formerly belonging to Venice; ceded to France by the treaty of Campo Formio, afterwards conquered from France by Russia and Turkey, and created into an independent state by those powers in conjunction with Austria. As if *our* interference were necessary to give effect to what all these powers together had already determined; and as if *we* could have any thing to do with a state at the further end of the Mediterranean, at the moment, when for reasons too wise to be instantly disclosed, and with a magnanimity too great to be understood, we are abandoning that sea altogether.

"This was too extravagant to obtain credit. Those, however, who pretended to be in the secret, had a more plausible story to tell. The republic of the *seven islands*, was ac-

ording to them, to consist of the islands which *we restore* to France and her allies, by the present happy settlement. *Martinique, Tobago, St. Lucia*, in the West Indies, *Malta* and *Minorca* in the Mediterranean, and the islands of *St. Pierre* and *Miquelon* on the coast of Newfoundland, just make SEVEN ISLANDS. And those short-sighted politicians, who have hitherto wondered at our restoring all these conquests, apparently without any equivalent, and had in fact made over to the enemy, rather the seeds of distraction than the means of strength, by a stipulation that interests so discordant, and territories so distant, should be united under one government.

"I own this solution was much more probable, if it had been to be believed, that the conductors of the negotiation were at all foolishly solicitous about the strength of the enemy. But does this appear on the face of any part of the treaty? can any man point out to me a single provision against the aggrandizement of France? a single trait of jealousy or apprehension on the subject? Is not the obvious and laudable policy of the whole transaction to make England retreat within herself, and in herself alone look for strength and consolation? to secure to ourselves the protection of France, instead of attempting to curb her power; and with these views and for these purposes, may not the time come, when to have obtained beforehand from the first Consul, the pledged acknowledgment of the independence of the republic of the seven islands of *Great Britain, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Wight, and Man*, may be the best proof of the foresight and the profound political knowledge of the present administration."

It was not to be supposed that a writer of the unflinching and uncompromising character of Cobbett, could long continue to fulminate his invectives against the leading political characters of the day, without being ultimately caught in the snares which his enemies were industriously laying for him in every quarter, where they thought it was likely to entrap him. Thus, in the year 1803, some articles which appeared

in the *Weekly Register*, drew down upon its editor the not very desirable attention of the Attorney General. The alleged libels were upon the Earl of Hardwicke, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Mr. Justice Osborne, one of the judges of the Court of King's Bench, in Ireland; and Mr. Marsden, Under Secretary of State for Ireland.

The trial came on in the Court of King's Bench, at Westminster, on Thursday, the 24th May, 1804, before the Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough, and a Special Jury.

Counsel for the crown:—The Attorney General, the Solicitor General, Mr. Erskine, Mr. Garrow, Mr. Dallas, and Mr. Abbot.

Counsel for the defendant:—Mr. Adam, and Mr. Richardson.

The information contained Six Counts. The first of which was:—"That William Cobbett, late of Westminster in the County of Middlesex, gentleman, being a malicious and ill-disposed person, and unlawfully and maliciously devising and intending to move and incite the liege subjects of our said Lord the King, to hatred and dislike of our said Lord the King's administration of the government of this Kingdom, and to insinuate and cause it to be believed that the people of that part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, called Ireland, were oppressed, aggrieved, and injured by our said Lord the King's government of the said part of the said United Kingdom, and to traduce, defame, and vilify the persons employed by our said Lord the King, in the administration of the government of the said part of the said United Kingdom, and especially the Right Honourable Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, our said Lord the King's Lieutenant General, and Governor General of the said part of the said United Kingdom, and the Right Honourable John, Lord Redesdale, our said Lord the King's Lord Chancellor and Keeper of the Great Seal, and one of his most Honourable Privy Council, of and for the said part of the said United Kingdom, on the fifth day of November, in the forty-fourth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third,

by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, at Westminster in the County of Middlesex, unlawfully and maliciously did print and publish, and cause and procure to be printed and published, a certain scandalous and malicious libel in the form of a letter, intituled, Affairs of Ireland, containing therein divers scandalous and malicious matters and things of and concerning the said part of the said United Kingdom, and the people thereof, and our said Lord the King's government thereof; and also of and concerning the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, being such Lieutenant and Governor as aforesaid, and the said John, Lord Redesdale, so being such Chancellor and Privy Counsellor as aforesaid, and also of and concerning Alexander Marsden, Esquire, then and there being one of the under Secretaries in the Office of the Chief Secretary of the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, so being such Lieutenant and Governor as aforesaid, (that is to say) in one part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say)"—

"SIR,

"*Equo ne credite Teucris*, was the advice which, in a dangerous moment, Laocoon gave to the Trojans. It will be remembered that the *equus*, against which that sagacious adviser cautioned his countrymen, was a wooden one. His countrymen did not regard Laocoon. They received the wooden representative of wisdom. They approached it, as if it possessed authority and power. Its wooden head towered above their houses. But, though the machine itself was innoxious wood, the credulous Trojans found its hollow head and exalted sides were nothing less than receptacles for greedy speculators and blood-thirsty assassins. The ingenious author of the story did not mean to confine the lesson, which it inculcates, to the tale of Troy alone. He meant to take advantage of that easy metaphorical expression, which, by the common assent of mankind, has moulded itself into most languages, and by which a certain species of head (which

the moderns by various moral experiments, have ascertained to be a non-conductor of ideas) has been denominated a wooden head. He meant to caution future nations not to put trust or confidence in the apparent innocence of any such wooden instrument; and not to suffer themselves to be led to exalt it into consequence, or to pay it any respect. He meant to tell them that any people, who submitted to be governed by a wooden head, would not find their security in its supposed innoxiousness, as its hollowness would soon be occupied by instruments of mischief. When I found, sir, this portion of the kingdom overwhelmed by such consequences to our property, as the rapacity of Mr. Marsden and his friends, and such consequences to our lives as the pikes of Mr. Emmett and his friends have lately produced: when I could trace all these evils as the inevitable issue from the head and body of such a government as that of Lord Hardwicke, and I am told of his innoxiousness, and his firmness, I still reply the story of the wooden horse, and I shall still, notwithstanding the fate of Laocoon, raise my voice to my countrymen and cry, *Equo ne credite Teucri*. Not, sir, that I would be understood literally. I do not mean to assert that the head of my Lord Hardwicke is absolutely built of timber. My application, like that of the original author of the tale, is only metaphorical. Yet, at the same time, I cannot avoid suspecting, that if the head of his Excellency were submitted to the analysis of any such investigator of nature as Lavoisier, it would be found to contain a superabundant portion of particles of a very ligneous tendency. This, sir, is the Lord Hardwicke of Doctor Addington, against whose government 'not a murmur of complaint has been heard,'—while our property has been subjected to the plunder of his clerks, and our persons have been exposed to pikes of the rebels. Still, however, the innocence of Lord Hardwicke, as to any intention of mischief, is held forth. But, I reply in the words of Mr. Burke: 'they who truly mean well must be fearful of acting ill. Delusive good intention is no excuse for presumption.' And I may add, in my own words, that the govern-

ment of a harmless man is not, therefore, a harmless government." And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say): "Inquiry and research are the duty and resource of the ignorant, and therefore I did inquire. The result of no small attention bestowed in this pursuit was, that I discovered of our Viceroy, that he was in rank an earl; in manners a gentleman; in morals a good father and a kind husband; and that he had a good library in St. James's Square. Here I should have been for ever stopped, if I had not, by accident, met with one Mr. Lindsay, a Scotch parson, since become (and I am sure it must be by Divine Providence, for it would be impossible to account for it by secondary causes) Bishop of Killaloo in Ireland.— From this Mr. Lindsay, I further learned, that my Lord Hardwicke was celebrated for understanding the modern method of fattening sheep as well as any man in Cambridgeshire." And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following (that is to say): "While I have been writing, sir, a map of the West Indies happened to hang before me. My eyes wandered, I know not why, upon it, and fixed upon one of those little islands, which have been lately, by the British troops, redeemed from the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis at Amiens. Give me leave to suppose, that, in the course of a few years, one of those little islands should become highly cultivated, and that a considerable portion of British property became vested in its land, and in its trade. Suppose, that, by some unfortunate combination of events, this little island should be deeply shaken by insurrection within, and should be loudly menaced by invasion from without. Suppose a powerful fleet of the enemies of the British name lay to windward, ready filled with troops for landing, while a desperate band of ruffians were secretly arming in its bosom, ready to aid that landing, of a foreign enemy. Suppose, in this distress, a committee of West India proprietors, whose money had been vested in this little island, should apply to the Doctor Addington for assistance: and suppose he were to rise up and desire them to quit their apprehen-

sions, for that he had entrusted the care of their island to a very eminent sheep-feeder, from Cambridgeshire, who was to be assisted in all his counsels by a very able and strong-built chancery pleader from Lincoln's Inn. Give me leave to ask you, sir, who know the city much better than I can pretend to do, what would a sugar committee, issuing from one of their coffee-houses, say to such an answer from a British minister? Why, sir, the walls of St. Stephen's, and the chambers in Downing-street, would be made to ring with their vociferous reproaches. And yet, sir, to this situation is that portion of the United Kingdom reduced; on the strength and vigour of which, at this moment, not only its own safety, but, as I have in my former letter, stated, the safety of the British empire, and, consequently, I may assume, the safety of Europe does entirely depend. Against the truth of the description I have given of its rulers, I may challenge the most daring supporters of the present government to produce me one single act in the lives of either of those truly great characters of the Doctor (meaning the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, and John, Lord Redesdale,) which can entitle them to claim one particle of trust or confidence from the public, beyond the bounds and limits, within which I have encircled their exploits. On the chancery pleader, (meaning the said John, Lord Redesdale) perhaps I may have laid too great a stress; he is not of the first consequence, though, in a future letter, I may, perhaps, point out to you the mischiefs which the intermeddling of such a man in matters out of the course of his practice may occasion. But, with respect to Lord Hardwicke, it may be replied, that my challenge is unfair, because it is impossible to justify his having been appointed to the government of Ireland by any instances of former political ability, as the acceptance of his preseat office was his first political essay. What! Is he one of the tribe of the Hobarts, Westmorelands, and Camdens? Is he one of that tribe, who have been sent over to us to be trained up here into politicians, as they train the surgeons' apprentices in the hospitals, by setting them at first to bleed the pauper

patients? Is this a time for a continuation of such wanton experiments? The gift of Lord Hardwicke to us, (meaning thereby, the appointment of the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, to the said place and office of Lieutenant General and Governor General of the said part of the said United Kingdom,) at such a period, cannot be compared to any thing else than the prank of Falstaff upon Prince Hal at the battle of Shrewsbury, when the knight handed over his pistol to the Prince. For, indeed, sir, by the present to us of Lord Hardwicke, that sentence has been proved to us in a bloody truth, which Falstaff said in a good humoured jest, 'here's what will sack a city.'—To the great scandal and disgrace of the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, and John, Lord Redesdale. In contempt of our said Lord the King and his laws, to the evil example of all others in the like case offending, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

2nd COUNT.—Applies to the libel on the Honourable Charles Osborne, one of the judges of the Court of King's Bench in Ireland, and on Alexander Marsden, under Secretary of State for Ireland. The following being charged as the libels: "What I have now to touch upon must be done with a delicate hand. I will confine myself to a bare narrative of facts, and will not presume to give any opinion. As soon as the government had fully recovered its recollection, a commission directed to five of the judges, issued for the trial of those rebels who had been arrested for treason committed in the county and city of Dublin. This commission having issued, while the judges were on circuit, was filled up (and very properly filled up) with the names of the five senior of those judges who were then on the circuits, which were likely to terminate at the earliest period of time. Such was the reason given by government for the particular selection of the judges named in that commission, and it certainly was a good reason. In some time after this commission had been sitting, it became necessary to issue a new commission for the trial of the rebels in the shires of Antrim and of Down. In the

appointment of this second commission, the principle which directed the selection in the first, was not adhered to. On the contrary, the junior judge of the twelve (meaning the said Charles Osborne,) was very anxiously called out, and placed in this new commission, over the heads of a number of his seniors. This, however, could not, and ought not to have given offence to any of those senior judges, because, whatever opinion of them the government may have manifested in such an appointment, the opinion of the present government upon such a subject (known to be influenced by motives very different from general justice) is too contemptible to have the slightest effect upon any of those learned judges in the public mind. The circumstance, therefore, was not at first attended to. There is published in this city a newspaper called the Dublin Journal. It is, in general, conducted with good sense, loyalty, and a regard to truth; but, in particular deviations, it is known to be under the control and immediate direction of government. In that paper of the 10th of October last, a publication appeared, which purported to be a charge given by the junior judge above alluded to, to the grand jury of the county of Antrim. In this place I beg now to declare, that I am far from attempting to assert, that the learned judge did pronounce any such charge; and when I speak of his charge, I request you will understand I mean only the newspaper publication above mentioned. In the newspaper publication, the learned judge is made to tell the grand jury, that 'through the well-timed efforts and strenuous exertions of a wise and energetic government, &c., the progress of such crimes as lately disgraced this country had been effectually checked.' If the learned justice did make any such assertion, (which I am far from supposing) with what amazement the grand jury must have received such a broadside, poured upon the truth of the fact, I cannot, as I was not present, know; but I can very well imagine what the feelings of twenty-three well-informed gentlemen must have been. Their respect, and a thorough knowledge of their duty would necessarily keep them silent."—And in another

part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say): "But, sir, suggestion does not stop here. Men ask, how could (if the learned justice did make any such assertion) the learned justice be led to give credit to a position which contradicts the evidence of the senses of every man in the kingdom, who was present at, or knew any thing of the transaction? How could a learned judge be supposed to assert that which no man in the kingdom would assert, unless he had some reasons of the same nature as those which prevailed on Mr. Marsden's attorney-general, on the trials for high treason, to assert something of the same kind? Men, sir, couple the extraordinary selection of the learned justice from amongst his fellows, with the extraordinary assertion attributed to him in a government newspaper, and they ask, if he made that assertion, where did he get his information? Was he ever in Mr. Marsden's audience-room since the night of the 23d of July? What passed there? What were the predisposing causes which induced government to select particularly that learned justice? Could government have foreseen (and if so, by what faculty) that the learned justice would have given an instruction to the grand jury, so very useful and so very grateful to the government? What night telescope could have been applied to the eye of Mr. Marsden, which, through the dark womb of things unborn, could have enabled him to perceive through this little future star of praise, springing from the creative lips of the learned justice? Here, sir, decorum towards you and towards the public, induces me to be silent as to the other, and, perhaps, stronger observations. But I may, I believe, add what men also say, that if it were possible the ermine robe of the most awful attribute of his majesty should have been wrapped round the acts of Mr. Marsden, in order to screen them from public disgrace, we might then look for another, but not less fatal end to our liberties and to our constitution, than that which rebellion or invasion could produce. And in truth, they say, that except as to momentary effects, rebellion and invasion might be viewed with indifference, if it can be supposed, that the

stained hands of a petty clerk had been washed in the very fountain of justice."—And in other parts of which said last-mentioned libel, were and are contained divers scandalous and malicious matters and things, of and concerning the said John, Lord Redesdale, and the conduct of the said John, Lord Redesdale, as such Chancellor and Privy Counsellor as aforesaid, by way of antithesis and contrast between the conduct, which in and by the said last-mentioned libel it is insinuated, that the said John, Lord Redesdale, as such Chancellor and Privy Counsellor as aforesaid, had adopted and pursued, and the conduct which in and by the said last-mentioned libel it is asserted, that the late Right Honourable Lloyd, Lord Kenyon, now deceased, would have adopted and pursued, (that is to say) in one part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say): "Instead of calling him (meaning the said late Lloyd, Lord Kenyon) to the high station which he so ably filled, had it pleased his majesty to bless the western neighbours of Cambricus (meaning the people of the said part of the said United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, called Ireland,) who certainly owe the honest and warm-hearted principality no ill will, with Lord Kenyon for their chancellor; I can very well conceive what Lord Kenyon, in such a situation, would have done, and also, what he would not have done. From the rare modesty of nature, or from a rare precision of self-knowledge, Lord Kenyon would have acted with reserve and circumspection, on his arrival in a country, with the moral qualities of the inhabitants of which, and with their persons, manners, and individual characters and connexions, he must have been utterly unacquainted. In such a country, torn with domestic sedition and treason, threatened with foreign invasion, and acting, since the union, under an untried constitution, if Doctor Addington had required that Lord Kenyon should direct a Cambridgeshire Earl (meaning the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke) 'in all his councils,' Lord Kenyon would as soon, at the desire of Lord St. Vincent, have undertaken to pilot a line of battle ship through the Needles. Particularly, the

integrity of Lord Kenyon would have shrunk from such an undertaking, if a condition had been added to it, that no one nobleman or gentleman who possessed any rank, estate, or connexion in the country, should upon any account be consulted (meaning and insinuating thereby, and intending to cause it to be believed, that he the said John, Lord Redesdale, as such Chancellor and Privy Counsellor as aforesaid, had undertaken to direct the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, in all his councils as such Lieutenant and Governor as aforesaid, in the government of the said part of the said United Kingdom, with a condition that no one nobleman or gentleman who possessed any rank, estate, or connexion in the said part of the said United Kingdom, should be consulted as to the government thereof.) His pride would have spurned at the undertaking, if he were told, that to the Cambridge-shire Earl (meaning the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke) and himself, in the cares of government, a clerk in the secretary's office, and a couple of lawyers without political habits, political information, or honourable connexion, were to be joined as assessors, and to be the only assessors. And Lord Kenyon's pride and integrity would have both joined in preventing him from being, himself, the instrument of introducing such men into a cabinet of government. (Meaning and insinuating thereby, and intending to cause it to be believed, that the said John, Lord Redesdale, as such Chancellor and Privy Counsellor as aforesaid, had been the instrument of introducing a clerk into the secretary's office, and a couple of lawyers, without political habits, political information, or honourable connexion, into the cabinet of the government of the said part of the said United Kingdom.) "If any one man could be found, of whom a young but unhappy victim of the justly offended laws of his country, had, in the moment of his conviction and sentence, uttered the following apostrophe—'That viper! whom my father nourished! He it was from whose lips I first imbibed those principles and doctrines, which now, by their effects, drag me to my grave; and he it is who is now brought forward as my prosecutor,

and who, by an unheard of exercise of the prerogative, has wantonly lashed, with a speech to evidence, the dying son of his former friend, when that dying son had produced no evidence, had made no defence, but, on the contrary, had acknowledged the charge, and had submitted to his fate.' Lord Kenyon would have turned with horror from such a scene, in which, although guilt was in one part to be punished, yet in the whole drama, justice was confounded, humanity outraged, and loyalty insulted. Of Lord Kenyon, therefore, (Cambrians must well know) it never could have been believed, that he himself would lead such a character forward, introduce him to the favour of a deceived sovereign, clothe him in the robes, and load him with the emoluments of office. Lord Kenyon must have known, that a noble Duke for having toasted at a drunken club, in a common tavern, to a noisy rabble, 'the sovereignty of the people,' was struck, by his majesty's command, out of the Privy Council, and deprived of all his offices both civil and military. If, therefore, any man were to be found, who, not at a drunken club, or to a brawling rabble, but in a grave and high assembly; not in the character of an inebriated toast-master, but in that of a sober constitutional lawyer, had insisted on the sovereignty of the people as a first principle of the English law, and had declared, that by law an appeal lay from the decision of the tellers of the houses of Parliament, to that of the 'tellers of the nation;' and, that if a particular law were disagreeable to the people, however it might have been enacted, with all royal and parliamentary solemnity, nevertheless, it was not binding, and the people, by the general law, were exempted from obedience to such a particular law, because the people were the supreme and ultimate judges of what was for their own benefit; Lord Kenyon, if he had been Chancellor in any kingdom in Europe, would have shrunk from recommending any such man to the favour of a monarch, while there yet remained a shadow of monarchy visible in the world."—Meaning and insinuating thereby, and intending to cause it to be believed, that the said John, Lord Redesdale, as such Chan-

cellor and Privy Counsellor as aforesaid, had recommended a base and disloyal man to the favour of our said Lord the King.

And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say): "It was said of Lord Kenyon, that he loved money. If so, he loved his own money only, and not the money of any other man. Lord Kenyon, therefore, as Chancellor, never would have made any rule or order, by the effects of which the secretary of a Master of the Rolls would be deprived of all fees, for the purpose of throwing all those fees into the hands of the secretary to the Chancellor, the better to enable that secretary to discharge the pension of some unknown annuitant on his official profits,"—meaning and insinuating thereby, and intending to cause it to be believed, that the said John, Lord Redesdale, as such Chancellor as aforesaid, had wickedly and corruptly made an order, by which the secretary of the Master of the Rolls of the said part of the said United Kingdom would be deprived of his fees, for the purpose of throwing the same fees into the hands of the secretary of himself the said Lord Redesdale, to enable his said secretary to discharge the pension of some person receiving an annuity out of the official profits of his said secretary. And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say): "The professional pride and the inborn honour of Lord Kenyon, would never have suffered him to enter into a combination to sap, by underhand means, the independence of his brethren the judges, (meaning and insinuating thereby, and intending to cause it to be believed, that the said John, Lord Redesdale, as such Chancellor as aforesaid, had entered into a combination to sap, by underhand means, the independence of the judges of the said part of the said United Kingdom.) "He never would have suffered the great seal in his hands to be used for the purpose of garbling the bench, in order to gratify those who might be contented publicly to eulogize that government, which privately they must have despised," (meaning and insinuating thereby, and intending to cause it to be believed, that the said John, Lord Redes-

dale, as such Chancellor as aforesaid, had suffered the great seal of the said part of the said United Kingdom to be used for the purpose of garbling the bench of judges of the said part of the said United Kingdom, in order to gratify those who would publicly eulogize the government of the said part of the said United Kingdom, which they must have privately despised.) "Nor would he have employed any of his leisure in searching into offices for practices, by which he might harass the domestic arrangements of others, whose pride and whose integrity would not bend to his views, and thus double the vigour of his attack by practising on the hopes of some, and endeavouring to work upon the fears of others," (meaning and insinuating thereby, and intending to cause it to be believed, that the said John, Lord Redesdale, had searched into offices for practices, by which he might harass the domestic arrangements of other persons, whose pride and integrity would not bend to his views,) to the great scandal and disgrace of the said Philip, Earl of Hardwicke, John, Lord Redesdale, and Charles Osborne.

3rd COUNT. — Particularly applies to the libel on Lord Hardwicke, which ran as follows :—" Sir, *Equo ne credite Teucris*, was the advice which, in a dangerous moment, Laocoon gave to the Trojans. It will be remembered, that the equus against which that sagacious adviser cautioned his countrymen was a wooden one. His countrymen did not regard Laocoon. They received the wooden representative of wisdom. They approached it, as if it possessed authority and power. Its wooden head towered above their houses ; but, though the machine itself was innoxious wood, the credulous Trojans found its hollow head and exalted sides were nothing less than the receptacles for greedy speculators and blood-thirsty assassins. The ingenious author of the story did not mean to confine the lesson which it inculcates, to the tale of Troy alone. He meant to take advantage of that easy metaphorical expression, which by the common assent of mankind has moulded itself into most languages, and by which a

certain species of head, which the moderns, by various moral experiments, have ascertained to be a nonconductor of ideas, has been denominated a wooden head. He meant to caution future nations not to put trust or confidence in the apparent innocence of any such wooden instrument, and not to suffer themselves to be led to exalt it into consequence, or to pay to it any respect. He meant to tell them, that any people who submitted to be governed by a wooden head, would not find their security in its supposed innoxiousness, as its hollowness would soon be occupied by instruments of mischief. When I found, sir, this portion of the kingdom overwhelmed by such consequences to our property as the rapacity of Mr. Marsden and his friends, and such consequences to our lives as the pikes of Mr. Emmett and his friends have lately produced; when I could trace all these evils as the inevitable issue from the head and body of such a government as that of Lord Hardwicke, and I am told of his innoxiousness and his firmness, I still reply the story of the wooden horse, and I shall still, notwithstanding the fate of Laocoon, raise my voice to my countrymen and cry, *Equo ne credite Teucri*. Not, sir, that I would be understood literally, I do not mean to assert that the head of my Lord Hardwicke is absolutely built of timber. My application, like that of the original author of the tale, is only metaphorical; yet at the same time, I cannot avoid suspecting, that if the head of his excellency were submitted to the analysis of any such investigator of nature as Lavoisier, it would be found to contain a superabundant portion of particles of a very ligneous tendency. This, sir, is the Lord Hardwicke of Doctor Addington, 'against whose government not a murmur of complaint has been heard,' while our property has been subject to the plunder of his clerks, and our persons have been exposed to the pikes of the rebels; still, however, the innocence of Lord Hardwicke, as to any intention of mischief, is held forth. But I reply in the words of Mr. Burke, 'they who truly mean well must be fearful of acting ill. Delusive good in-

tention is no excuse for presumption ;' and I may add in my own words, that the government of a harmless man is not therefore a harmless government."

The 4th, 5th, and 6th counts are merely repetitions of the libellous passages, as applying individually to the respective parties. After the information had been gone through, the Attorney General addressed the Court and Jury as follows :

" MY LORD, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY—As I am very much disinclined, upon all occasions, to take up the valuable time of the Court, I sincerely lament, that, on the present occasion, I have been obliged to lengthen this record, by inserting in it so many passages ; for I am persuaded, that nothing is more conducive to justice, than that it should be confined within as narrow a compass as possible. But, gentlemen, it appeared to me impossible, that you, who are to pass your verdict of guilty, or not guilty, on the defendant in the case before you ; or that the Court who, if you find him guilty, will hereafter have to apportion his punishment, should be able to form any correct opinion of the true character of the libels, of their real malignity, of the mischievous intention of the author of them, and of the low means by which he endeavoured to effect his purpose, without laying before you such samples and passages, as would enable you to perceive, that I was not prosecuting a man for an inadvertent or an hasty expression, nor for the fair discharge of his profession as a public writer, who, in the hurry of the moment, had trespassed a little beyond the line of decency and propriety ; but, on the contrary, that it was directed against one, who, in a cool, systematic and deliberate manner, had endeavoured to degrade and vilify the whole administration of his Majesty's government in Ireland. It is not so much a libel upon my Lord Hardwicke, it is not so much a libel upon my Lord Redesdale, it is not so much a libel upon Mr. Justice Osborne or Mr. Secretary Marsden, merely for the purpose of traducing and vilifying those characters ; but those characters are traduced and vilified, for the purpose of bringing the whole government of Ireland

into contempt, and exposing it to the scorn and execration of the people of that country. When I shew to you, gentlemen, as I shortly shall do, that this is the real aim and bent of the whole of these libels, I trust it will not be imputed to me, that I am trespassing, in any degree, upon the liberty of the press, or that fair and free discussion of the conduct of public men and measures, which is the distinguished privilege of every Englishman, which has been abundantly enjoyed since I have had the honour to occupy the situation I hold, and of which Mr. Cobbett, I think, will not be the first man to complain of the violation.—You will also consider, gentlemen, not only the libellous language made use of, but the critical moment in which that language was used : at a moment when the minds of the people of Ireland were in a feverish and distempered state, and liable to be driven to a paroxysm of madness by the slightest impulse. And the taking advantage of a moment so perilous, tends powerfully to establish, that the most base and destructive motive actuated the mind of the defendant. Had the libel not been of that sweeping nature as to involve the whole political government of Ireland ; had it been simply directed against the noble earl at the head of that government ; or to the other dignified characters, who are the object of the defendant's slander ; those dignified characters would, in all probability, have treated it with silent disdain. But they considered that they had been made the medium of aspersions, which, if not animadverted upon, might be attended with consequences dangerous to the happiness of a large and valuable portion of his Majesty's subjects, and dangerous to the very existence of the British government in that part of the United Kingdom.

“ Gentlemen, you must be well aware, that the character of every government depends greatly upon the estimation in which those are held by whom it is conducted—both those who plan the measures, and those in an inferior situation, by whom such measures are carried into execution ; and if there is any one thing more than another, that can recommend a govern-

ment to the love and affection of the people, it is the purity and integrity of the administration of justice, and of those who deal it out, for the protection of their lives and their property. Yet, gentlemen, you will find, that in all these important particulars, the government of Ireland is attacked. My Lord Hardwicke as the head of that government, is treated as a person wholly incapable of performing the public functions, and represented as "a very eminent feeder of sheep in Cambridgeshire." My Lord Redesdale, who is placed so high in the counsels of the state, is denominated "a very able and strong-built chancery pleader from Lincoln's-Inn." Mr. Secretary Marsden is described as "a corrupt unprincipled, rapacious plunderer, preying upon the property of the state," and Mr. Justice Osborne is held forth as "the most corrupt instrument of a debased and degraded government, lending himself as a screen to conceal them from the disgrace their actions would naturally bring upon them."—Gentlemen, the first passage in the libel to which I shall draw your attention, forms part of a letter on the affairs of Ireland, signed by the name of Juverna, and was published in "Cobbett's Political Register," of the 5th of November last. The author takes occasion, by the well-known fable of the Trojan horse, to typify the whole Irish government. My Lord Hardwicke is described under the appellation of the "wooden representative of wisdom;" thereby comparing his Excellency to the wooden horse recorded in the history of the siege of Troy. But, perhaps, it will be best to read the several passages to you, and make my comments upon them as I proceed.—The first passage begins thus: "*Equo ne credite Teucro*, was the advice which, in a dangerous moment, Laocoon gave to the Trojans. It will be remembered that the *equus*, against which that sagacious adviser cautioned his countrymen, was a WOODEN one. His countrymen did not regard Laocoon. They received the wooden representative of wisdom. They approached it, as if it possessed authority and power. Its wooden head towered above their houses. But, though the machine itself was innoxious

wood, the credulous Trojans found its hollow head and exalted sides were nothing less than receptacles for greedy speculators and blood-thirsty assassins. The ingenious author of the story did not mean to confine the lesson, which it inculcates, to the tale of Troy alone. He meant to take advantage of that easy metaphorical expression, which by the common assent of mankind, has moulded itself into most languages, and by which a certain species of head (which the moderns by various moral experiments, have ascertained to be a non-conductor of ideas) has been denominated a wooden head. He meant to caution future nations not to put trust or confidence in the apparent innocence of any such wooden instrument; and not to suffer themselves to be led to exalt it into consequence, or to pay it any respect. He meant to tell them that any people, who submitted to be governed by a wooden head, would not find their security in its supposed innocuousness, as its hollowness would soon be occupied by instruments of mischief." Now, gentlemen, is this or is it not intended to apply to my Lord Hardwicke? The next passage begins thus: "When I found, sir, this portion of the kingdom overwhelmed by such consequences to our property as the rapacity of Mr. Marsden and his friends, and such consequences to our lives as the pikes of Mr. Emmett and his friends have lately produced: when I could trace all these evils as the inevitable issue from the head and body of such a government as that of Lord Hardwicke, and I am told of his innocuousness and firmness, I still reply the story of the wooden horse, and I shall still, notwithstanding the fate of Laocoon, raise my voice to my countrymen and cry *Equum credite Teucris*." Is it possible, gentlemen, that the passages I have read to you, can bear any other interpretation than that which I have put upon them? He then goes on, in a style of flippancy, that he does not mean to state literally that the head of his Excellency was absolutely built of timber. But I will give you the gentleman's own words: "not, sir, that I would be understood literally. I do not mean to assert that the head of my Lord Hardwicke is absolutely built

timber. My application, like that of the original author of the tale, is only metaphorical. Yet at the same time, I cannot avoid suspecting, that if the head of his Excellency were submitted to the analysis of any such investigator of nature as Lavoisier, it would be found to contain a superabundant portion of particles of a very ligneous tendency." Now, gentlemen, is there any thing in all this, that can be called a fair and liberal description of the conduct of a public character? He then goes on to say, "this, sir, is the Lord Hardwicke of Doctor Addington, against whose government 'not a murmur of complaint has been heard'—while our property has been subject to the plunder of his clerks, and our persons have been exposed to the pikes of the rebels. Still, however, the innocence of Lord Hardwicke, as to any intention of mischief, is held forth. But, I reply in the words of Mr. Burke: 'they who truly mean well must be fearful of acting ill. Delusive good intention is no excuse for presumption.' And I may add, in my own words, that the government of a harmless man is not, therefore, a harmless government." Gentlemen, I have already adverted to the indecency and flippancy of many expressions made use of in this libel. If this libeller had been hurried away with the temptation of saying a flippant thing, I should not have thought it a subject of criminal prosecution. But, in the case before you it is criminal, as indicating the spirit with which it was written, and as being descriptive of the mind of the man at the time he was making them. I would not, however, be understood to say, that even in the warmth of discussion upon public men and public measures, decency of language ought not to be preserved, and that any deviation therefrom is not punishable. What I mean, in this case, is, that I have thought it beneath the dignity of these high characters, to have taken notice of any personal abuse, if that personal abuse had not been connected with a systematic attack upon the whole of the Irish government. I do not mean to say, that the describing such a man as Addington, by the epithet of Doctor Addington, is degradation to him, not that I would advise that such an epithet should

become the subject of a prosecution in a court of justice; but, surely, no one who has the least liberality of feeling, or the least sense of decency, could think it becoming to taunt such a gentleman as Mr. Addington; a gentleman, who, the more he is known, the more his character will be admired. For my part, I feel no sympathy with those who think there is any wit in such titles. Mr. Addington is a son of a man, who most ably and skilfully practised in a liberal profession, who, by his talents, became justly eminent in that profession, and whose son raised himself by his great abilities to one of the highest offices in this country. I again say, that for any publication calling Mr. Addington "Doctor Addington," or for any flippancy of that nature, standing by itself, I should think it beneath the dignity of that right honourable gentleman, to make it the subject of a prosecution; but I also say, that when you see an epithet of this nature introduced, it does shew the spirit with which the libel was published, and that it was a systematic attack upon the whole government of Ireland, by bringing into contempt and ridicule, the persons placed by his majesty at the head of that government. The next passage runs thus: "Inquiry and research are the duty and the resource of the ignorant, and therefore I did inquire. The result of no small attention bestowed in this pursuit was, that I discovered, of our Viceroy, that he was in rank an earl; in manners, a gentleman; in morals, a good father and a kind husband; and that he had a good library in St. James's Square. Here I should have been forever stopped, if I had not, by accident, met with one Mr. Lindsay, a Scotch parson, since become (and I am sure must be by Divine Providence, for it would be impossible to account for it by secondary causes) Bishop of Killaloe, Ireland. From this Mr. Lindsay, I further learned, that Lord Hardwicke was celebrated for understanding the modern method of fattening of sheep as well as any man in Cambridgeshire." Now, gentlemen, I may be asked, calling my Lord Hardwicke the most distinguished character that can belong to a man—"in morals a good father and

husband," having "a good library in St. James' Square, and being attached to agricultural pursuits,"—I may be asked, I say, whether I mean to consider all these good qualities as being a libel on my Lord Hardwicke? Yes, gentlemen, I do, with the text with which they are accompanied. Qualities like these ought to have made the libeller pause before he ventured to attack such a character. He tells you, my Lord Hardwicke has got "a good library in St. James' Square," and that he is "celebrated for understanding the modern method of fattening a sheep as well as any man in Cambridgeshire!" Gentlemen, you must shut your eyes, you must shut your understandings, if you do not see these amiable qualities are attributed to Lord Hardwicke, with a slanderous, with an ill-natured meaning.—With respect to this fatterer of sheep in Cambridgeshire, he goes on to say:—"While I have been writing, sir, a map of the West Indies happened to hang before me. My eye wandered, I know not why, upon it, and fixed upon one of those little islands, which have been lately, by the British troops, redeemed from the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis at Amiens. Give me leave to suppose, that, in the course of a few years, one of those little islands should become highly cultivated, and that a considerable portion of British property became vested in its land and in its trade. Suppose, that, by some unfortunate combination of events, this little island should be deeply shaken by insurrection within, and should be loudly menaced by invasion from without. Suppose a powerful fleet of the enemies of the British name lay to windward, ready filled with troops for landing, while a desperate band of ruffians were secretly arming in its bosom, ready to aid that landing of a foreign enemy." (Alluding certainly to the state of Ireland.) "Suppose," he continues, "in this distress, a committee of West India proprietors, whose money had been vested in this little island, should apply to the Doctor Addington for assistance: and suppose he were to rise up and desire them to quiet their apprehensions, for that he had entrusted the care of their island to a very eminent

become the subject of a prosecution in a court of justice ; but, surely, no one who has the least liberality of feeling, or the least sense of decency, could think it becoming to taunt such a gentleman as Mr. Addington ; a gentleman, who, the more he is known, the more his character will be admired. For my part, I feel no sympathy with those who think there is any wit in such titles. Mr. Addington is a son of a man, who most ably and skilfully practised in a liberal profession, who, by his talents, became justly eminent in that profession, and whose son raised himself by his great abilities to one of the highest offices in this country. I again say, that for any publication calling Mr. Addington " Doctor Addington," or for any flippancy of that nature, standing by itself, I should think it beneath the dignity of that right honourable gentleman, to make it the subject of a prosecution ; but I also say, that when you see an epithet of this nature introduced, it does shew the spirit with which the libel was published, and that it was a systematic attack upon the whole government of Ireland, by bringing into contempt and ridicule, the persons placed by his majesty at the head of that government. The next passage runs thus : " Inquiry and research are the duty and the resource of the ignorant, and therefore I did inquire. The result of no small attention bestowed in this pursuit was, that I discovered, of our Viceroy, that he was in rank an earl ; in manners, a gentleman ; in morals, a good father and a kind husband ; and that he had a good library in St. James's Square. Here I should have been forever stopped, if I had not, by accident, met with one Mr. Lindsay, a Scotch parson, since become (and I am sure it must be by Divine Providence, for it would be impossible to account for it by secondary causes) Bishop of Killaloe in Ireland. From this Mr. Lindsay, I further learned, that my Lord Hardwicke was celebrated for understanding the modern method of fattening of sheep as well as any man in Cambridgeshire." Now, gentlemen, I may be asked, calling my Lord Hardwicke the most distinguished character that can belong to a man—" in morals a good father and kind

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sheep-feeder from Cambridgeshire, who was to be assisted in all his counsels by a very able and strong-built chancery pleader from Lincoln's Inn. Give me leave to ask you, sir, who know the city much better than I can pretend to do, what would a sugar committee, issuing from one of their coffee-houses, say to such an answer from a British minister? Why, sir, the walls of St. Stephen's, and the chambers in Downing-street, would be made to ring with their vociferous reproaches. And yet, sir, to this situation is that portion of the United Kingdom reduced; on the strength and vigour of which, at this moment, not only its own safety, but, as I have, in my former letter, stated, the safety of the British empire, and, consequently, I may assume, the safety of Europe does entirely depend. Against the truth of the description I have given of its rulers, I may challenge the most daring supporter of the present government to produce me one single act in the lives of either of those truly great characters of the Doctor, which can entitle them to claim one particle of trust or confidence from the public, beyond the bounds and limits, within which I have encircled their exploits." Now, gentlemen, will any man believe that there is any degree of candour in saying, that all that has been done by the British government for Ireland, is to send them a sheep-feeder from Cambridgeshire, and a strong-built chancery pleader from Lincoln's Inn, when I tell you, that at the moment when the government of Ireland is so abominably libelled, that country is defended, externally, and internally, by fleets and by armies, beyond what it ever has been in any former period of its history? Nay, gentlemen, I will go still farther. I will venture to assert, that Great Britain never was possessed of an army so well disciplined, so well appointed, so well regulated, and so well commanded, as that now in Ireland. And yet this libeller represents, that all that has been done for the people of Ireland, is to send them a sheep-feeder from Cambridgeshire, and a strong-built chancery pleader from Lincoln's Inn! Is not this telling the people of Ireland, that they must expect nothing from their

own government, and encouraging them to look to some other protection?—He next goes on to say :—

“On the chancery pleader, perhaps, I may have laid too great a stress—he is not of the first consequence—though, in a future letter, I may, perhaps, point out to you the mischiefs which the intermeddling of such a man in matters out of the course of his practice may occasion. But, with respect to Lord Hardwicke, it may be replied, that my challenge is unfair, because it is impossible to justify his having been appointed to the government of Ireland by any instance of former political ability, as the acceptance of his present office was his first political essay. What? Is he one of the tribe of the Hobarts, Westmorelands, and Camdens? Is he one of that tribe, who have been sent over to us to be trained up here into politicians, as they train the surgeons’ apprentices in the hospitals, by setting them at first to bleed the pauper patients? Is this a time for a continuation of such wanton experiment? The gift of Lord Hardwicke to us, at such a period, cannot be compared to any thing else than the prank of Falstaff upon Prince Hal at the battle of Shrewsbury, when the knight handed over his pistol to the prince. For, indeed, sir, by the present to us of Lord Hardwicke, that sentence has been proved to us in a bloody truth, which Falstaff said in a good-humoured jest—‘here’s what will sack a city.’” Now, who are the Hobarts, the Westmorelands and the Camdens to whom this libeller alludes? I will tell you, gentlemen. They are great and deservedly illustrious characters, who formerly occupied the highest situations in the government of Ireland. And, thus, you will perceive, that this is not only a libel upon the Irish government of the present day, but a libel upon former governments. With respect to my Lord Hardwicke, I will venture to say, that there never was a nobleman who, by his wise administration of justice, and his amiable and conciliatory manners, effected more for the tranquillity and happiness of Ireland than that nobleman has done. Totally to prevent sudden ebullitions of discontent and disaffection, is, perhaps,

beyond the reach of any talents ; but, to crush rebellion in its birth, to stifle the monster as soon as it appeared, was the achievement of my Lord Hardwicke. He put down insurrection, without offering violence to the constitution, by the mild but firm operation of the established law. The rebellious were punished, and the loyal were made secure, without infringing on the trial by jury, or on the general peace of the country ; and the necessary and wholesome vigour of the law did not interrupt the tranquillity of the nation at large, which feels itself grateful and happy, under the mild, the temperate, the firm, and the conciliatory government of the amiable nobleman, whose character is so scandalously aspersed in this abominable libel. I shall now proceed to that part of the libel which relates to Mr. Justice Osborne, and which forms the second libel stated on the record. And here, gentlemen, you will see that there is an attempt, by means of a thin covering, to impute to that learned judge improper conduct, in the course of a charge which he delivered to the Grand Jury for the county of Antrim. The libeller wraps up his poison in the shape of a dry narrative of facts. He begins thus :—

“ What I have now to touch upon must be done with a delicate hand. I will confine myself to a bare narrative of facts, and will not presume to give any opinion. As soon as the government had fully recovered its recollection, a commission, directed to five of the judges, issued for the trial of those rebels who had been arrested for treason committed in the county and city of Dublin. This commission, having issued while the judges were on circuit, was filled up (and very properly filled up) with the names of the five *senior* of those judges who were then on the circuits, which were likely to terminate at the earliest period of time. Such was the reason given by government for the particular selection of the judges named in that commission, and it certainly was a good reason. In some time after this commission had been sitting, it became necessary to issue a new commission for the trial of rebels in the shires of Antrim and of Down. In

the appointment of this second commission, the principle, which directed the selection in the first, was not adhered to. On the contrary, the *junior* judge of the twelve was very anxiously culled out, and placed in this new commission, over the heads of a number of his seniors. This, however, could not, and ought not to have given offence to any of those senior judges, because, whatever opinion of them the government may have manifested in such an appointment, the opinion of the present government upon such a subject (known to be influenced by motives very different from general justice) is too contemptible to have the slightest effect upon any of those learned judges in the public mind. The circumstance, therefore, was not at first attended to. There is published, in this city, a newspaper, called the *Dublin Journal*. It is, in general, conducted with good sense, loyalty, and a regard to truth; but, in particular deviations, it is known to be under the control and immediate direction of government. In that paper of the 20th of October last, a publication appeared, which purported to be a charge given by the *junior* judge above alluded to, to the grand jury of the county of Antrim. In this place I beg now to declare, that I am far from attempting to assert, that the learned judge did pronounce any such charge; and when I speak of his charge, I request you will understand I mean only the newspaper publication above mentioned. In the newspaper publication the learned judge is made to tell the grand jury, that, 'through the well-timed efforts and strenuous exertions of a wise and energetic government, &c., the progress of such crimes as lately disgraced this country had been effectually checked.' If the learned justice did make any such assertion; (which I am far from supposing) with what amazement the grand jury must have received such a broadside, poured upon the truth of the fact, I cannot, as I was not present, know; but I can very well imagine what the feelings of twenty-three well informed gentlemen must have been. Their respect, and a thorough knowledge of their duty would necessarily keep them silent. But though men remain silent

under the proper awe and control of a court of justice, their language only becomes more strenuous when that restraint is taken off, and they meet together in private confidence."

The libeller then proceeds to say: "But, sir, suggestion does not stop here. Men ask, how could (if the learned justice did make any such assertion) the learned justice be led to give credit to a position which contradicts the evidence of the senses of every man in the kingdom, who was present at, or knew any thing of the transaction? How could a learned judge be supposed to assert that, which no man in the kingdom would assert, unless he had some reasons of the same nature as those which prevailed on Mr. Marsden's attorney-general, on the trials for high treason, to assert something of the same kind? Men, sir, coupled the extraordinary selection of the learned justice from amongst his fellows, with the extraordinary assertion attributed to him in a government newspaper, and they ask, if he made that assertion, where did he get his information? Was he ever in Mr. Marsden's audience-room since the night of the 23rd of July? What passed there? What were the predisposing causes which induced government to select particularly that learned justice? Could government have foreseen (and if so, by what faculty) that the learned justice would have given an instruction to the grand jury, so very useful and so very grateful to the government? What night telescope could have been applied to the eye of Mr. Marsden, which, through the dark womb of things unborn, could have enabled him to perceive through this little future star of praise, springing from the creative lips of the learned justice? Here, sir, decorum towards you and towards the public induces me to be silent as to the other, and perhaps, stronger observations. But I may, I believe, add what men also say, that if it were possible the ermined robe of the most awful attribute of his majesty should have been wrapped round the acts of Mr. Marsden, in order to screen them from public disgrace, we might then look for another, but not less fatal end to our liberties and to our constitution than that which rebellion or invasion could produce.

And in truth, they say, that except as to momentary effects, rebellion and invasion might be viewed with indifference, if it can be supposed, that the stained hands of a petty clerk had been washed in the very fountain of justice." Thus, gentlemen, is Mr. Justice Osborne accused with having poured in a broadside upon the fact, meaning thereby, that that learned judge had been guilty of a falsehood. And then, with reference to Mr. Secretary Marsden, it proceeds to state, that rebellion and invasion were evils of less magnitude, than the ermined robe of his majesty being wrapped round a man, whose blood-stained hands had been washed in the very fountain of mercy. Now, gentlemen, is this or is it not, one of the most dangerous libels to the peace and tranquillity of Ireland, that could possibly have been published? And can there be expected any loyalty or any attachment in the people of that country, if such foul aspersions upon individual characters in the administration of justice be suffered to pass without the reprehension of the law?

The next point I come to, are the libels upon my Lord Redesdale. And here I cannot help saying, that it would have been an unpleasant part of my duty, had I been called on to prosecute for this alone. Not that there is not in this part of the publication, abundant matter for prosecution, but, personally, I should have found the task a very unpleasant one, on account of my known connexion with that noble lord, I shall, therefore, say of him less on that account; and less, I am inclined to believe, than any of my learned friends around me would have said of him, had it fallen to their lot to manage this prosecution. That noble lord is well known to all the bar in this country, and I leave it to that bar to feel for his character as it deserves to be regarded; but I am sure it will not be said, that because the Chancellor of Ireland happens to be brother-in-law to the Attorney-General of England, that, therefore, he is to go unprotected. Gentlemen, this is one of the most scandalous and abominable libels that ever came before an English jury. Is it possible that that noble lord should have so far taken leave of his former cha-

acter as to be guilty of the corruption with which he is here charged? The libel professes to draw a comparison between the late Lord Kenyon and the present Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and under the artful pretext of shewing us what my Lord Kenyon would not have done, he pretty plainly insinuates what my Lord Redesdale has done. The libeller introduces it in this way:—

Instead of calling him to the high station which he so ably filled, had it pleased his majesty to bless the western neighbours of Cambricus (who certainly owe the honest and warm-hearted principality no ill will) with Lord Kenyon for their chancellor; I can very well conceive what Lord Kenyon, in such a situation would have done, and also, what he would not have done. From a rare modesty of nature, or from a rare precision of self-knowledge, Lord Kenyon would have acted with reserve and circumspection, on his arrival in a country, with the moral qualities of the inhabitants of which, and with their persons, manners, and individual characters and connexions, he must have been utterly unacquainted. In such a country, torn with domestic sedition and treason, threatened with foreign invasion, and acting, since the union, under an untried constitution, if Doctor Addington had required that Lord Kenyon should direct a Cambridgeshire earl 'in ALL his councils,' Lord Kenyon would as soon, at the desire of Lord St. Vincent, have undertaken to pilot a line of battle ship through the Needles. Particularly, the integrity of Lord Kenyon would have shrunk from such an undertaking, if a condition had been added to it that no one nobleman or gentleman who possessed any rank, estate, or connection in the country, should upon any account be consulted. His pride would have spurned at the undertaking, if he were told, that to the Cambridgeshire earl and himself in the cares of government, a clerk in the secretary's office, and a couple of lawyers without political habits, political information or honourable connexion, were to be joined as assessors, and to be the only assessors. And Lord Kenyon's pride and integrity would have both joined

in preventing him from being, himself, the instrument of introducing such men into a cabinet of government. If any one man could be found, of whom a young but unhappy victim of the justly offended laws of his country, had in the moment of his conviction and sentence, uttered the following apostrophe—‘That viper! whom my father nourished! He it was from whose lips I first imbibed those principles and doctrines, which now by their effects drag me to my grave; and he it is who is now brought forward as my prosecutor, and who by an unheard of exercise of the prerogative, has wantonly lashed, with a speech to evidence, the dying son of his former friend, when that dying son had produced no evidence, had made no defence, but, on the contrary, had acknowledged the charge, and had submitted to his fate.’—Lord Kenyon would have turned with horror from such a scene, in which although guilt was in one part to be punished, yet in the whole drama, justice was confounded, humanity outraged, and loyalty insulted.”—Gentlemen, this passage alludes, as I shall presently shew you, to Mr. Plunkett, the present solicitor-general of Ireland. It charges my Lord Redesdale with having improperly introduced that gentleman into the government of Ireland, and accuses the said solicitor-general with having made an improper speech on the trial of Mr. Emmett for high treason. As to the slander upon the solicitor-general of Ireland, that learned gentleman has not made it the subject of a criminal charge, but has commenced a civil prosecution against Mr. Cobbett, thereby affording him an opportunity of justifying and proving the truth of what he has published. Gentlemen, the whole of this passage is a most gross libel upon my Lord Redesdale, and not merely upon my Lord Redesdale, but upon the whole Irish government. He says, that “Lord Kenyon would have turned with horror from such a scene.” What scene? The scene of the trial of Mr. Emmett, that traitor, who was the heart and fountain of that bloody rebellion. Yet he says, that Lord Kenyon would have turned with horror from such a scene! Gentlemen, am I to be called upon to make any

comments on a passage so infamous as this is?—He goes on to say; “Of Lord Kenyon, therefore, (Cambicus must well know) it never could have been believed that he himself would lead such a character forward, introduce him to the favour of a deceived sovereign, clothe him with robes, and load him with the emoluments of office. Lord Kenyon must have known that a noble duke for having toasted at a drunken club, in a common tavern, to a noisy rabble, ‘the sovereignty of the people,’ was struck, by his majesty’s command, out of the privy council, and deprived of all his offices both civil and military. If, therefore, any man were to be found, who, not at a drunken club, or to a brawling rabble, but in a grave and high assembly; not in the character of an inebriated toast-master, but in that of a sober constitutional lawyer, had insisted on the sovereignty of the people as a first principle of the English law; and had declared, that by law an appeal lay from the decision of the tellers of the houses of parliament, to that of the ‘tellers of the nation;’ and that if a particular law were disagreeable to the people, however it might have been enacted with all royal and parliamentary solemnity, nevertheless, it was not binding, and the people by the general law were exempted from obedience to such a particular law, because the people were the supreme and ultimate judges of what was for their own benefit.—Lord Kenyon, if he had been chancellor in any kingdom in Europe, would have shrunk from recommending any such man to the favour of a monarch, while there yet remained a shadow of monarchy visible in the world.” Thereby intimating, that, knowing the character of that gentleman, my Lord Redesdale had, nevertheless, recommended him to the favour of the sovereign, and to the situation he holds under the government of Ireland. But, gentlemen, the libel does not stop here; it goes on to say: “it was said of Lord Kenyon that he loved money. If so, he loved his own money only, and not the money of any other man. Lord Kenyon therefore, as chancellor, never would have made any rule or order by the effects of which, the secretary of a Master of the Rolls would be deprived of all

fees, for the purpose of throwing all those fees into the hands of the secretary to the Chancellor, the better to enable that secretary to discharge the pension of some unknown annuitant on his official profits." Thereby imputing to Lord Redesdale, that he loved the money of other men, and that he corruptly ordered the fees of the secretary of the Master of the Rolls to be given to his own secretary, the better to enable him to pay a pension to an unknown annuitant; when, in truth, Lord Redesdale did not so much as appoint his own secretary, but continued the gentleman who filled that office under his predecessor my Lord Clare.—He goes on: "the professional pride and the inborn honour of Lord Kenyon, would never have suffered him to enter into a combination to sap, by underhand means, the independence of his brethren the judges. He never would have suffered the great seal in his hands to be used for the purpose of garbling the bench, in order to gratify those who might be contented publicly to eulogize that government, which privately they must have despised." Here, gentlemen, the mask is thrown aside—"Nor would he have employed any of his leisure in searching into offices for practices, by which he might harass the domestic arrangements of others, whose pride and integrity would not bend to his views; and thus double the vigour of his attack by practising on the hopes of some, and endeavouring to work upon the fears of others." Here, he directly charges Lord Redesdale with employing his leisure in searching into offices for practices, by which he might harass the domestic arrangements of those whose pride and integrity would not bend to his views. And I ask you, gentlemen, whether crimes in a judge, more gross or more abominable than those thus attributed to my Lord Redesdale, could possibly have any existence?—Gentlemen, such are the passages, which I have selected for your consideration, from a mass of others equally libellous. I have taken them from the third and fourth Letters of Juverna, though any one letter of the series would have shewn you the libellous spirit with which they were written. I am not at all

aware what sort of defence it is intended to be set up for Mr. Cobbett. Perhaps it may be said, that the defendant was only concerned in the publication, and not in the composition of this libel. But, gentlemen, Mr. Cobbett must either be the author, or the vehicle of the libel of another man, and he that makes public the libel of another man, is as guilty, as if he were the writer of it himself. The inclination of my opinion is, that Mr. Cobbett is not the author; but this is no mitigation of his guilt. I have told you that I have selected the passages from two letters published at different periods; and I have been induced to do so, in order to convince you, that the publication was not a careless act, but that the crime was repeated with the utmost deliberation. Nay, gentlemen, I may go farther, and tell you, that the malice of Mr. Cobbett in these publications has been manifested in an uncommon degree; for since his attention has been called to this subject, and even down to Tuesday last, Mr. Cobbett finding that the public curiosity was very much turned to these libels, and that it was a lucrative business, has suffered the sale of these very publications which are the subject of this prosecution, uninterruptedly to go on. I, therefore, apprehend, that no excuse can be found for Mr. Cobbett in this case; nor can he be called, with any propriety, the mere editor of these libels. If he is the author, every one will admit that he must be answerable for them in point of law. And if he is not the author, he is equally answerable, or rather more so, in point of morals, for being the publisher, under the particular circumstances of the case. Gentlemen, Mr. Cobbett either is, or conceives himself to be, the ablest, best and most consummate politician, and the most pure and disinterested editor of a newspaper the world ever saw. He either is, or believes himself, beyond the ordinary rank of mankind, and that therefore, there should be considerable indulgence shewn to a man of this description for thinking meanly of those who grovel so much below him; but the difficulty is in justifying him in holding forth others to contempt, because they are not equal to himself. Gentle-

men, who is Mr. Cobbett? Is he a man of family in this country? Is he a man writing purely from motives of patriotism? *Quis homo hic est? Quo patre natus?* He seems to imagine himself a species of censor, who, elevated to the solemn seat of judgment, is to deal about his decisions for the instruction of mankind. He casts his eye downward, like the character represented by the poet of nature, from Dover Cliff, and looks upon the inferior world below as pigmies beneath him. Perhaps, in the proud contemplation of his own abilities, he supposes he is not to submit to the laws and institutions adapted to the vulgar herd of society; but, gentlemen, whatever may be our inclination to forgive what comes from such a censor, I am afraid we must be content to consider him, in this Court, as a common being, and to subject him to the usual restrictions which he will admit to be accommodated only to our inferior capacities.—Gentlemen, it is not easy to dive into another man's mind. But I will suppose a case, that these publications are the work of some person who imputes corrupt motives to government, because he himself was disappointed in a system of his own, and who libels government for corruption, when the absence of that corruption is the true cause of the complaint. Supposing, I say, this to be the case, what can be the excuse for such a man? What can be the excuse for slander originating in motives of this nature? I do not say that these publications do originate in such motives, because I cannot prove it. I wish I could; for, in that case, the prosecution certainly should not stop here.

WITNESSES ON THE PART OF THE CROWN.

Mr. Barry, from the Stamp Office, produced the affidavit filed in the office, with the names of Cox and Baylis, as the printers, No. 75, Great Queen-street; R. Bagshaw, the publisher, Bow-street, Covent-garden; and William Cobbett, 15, Duke-street, St. Catherine's, Westminster, as the sole proprietor of the Weekly Political Register.—Mr. Adam, for the defendant, took two objections to this part of the evi-

dence; the one was, that the hand-writing of Mr. Cobbett was not proved, and the other, that the place of his residence was not properly described, there being no such situation as appeared on the face of the affidavit. The proof was immediately given by the witness, who said he saw the affidavit signed, and the latter objection was over-ruled by his Lordship, this being the description given of his residence by the defendant himself.

Mr. Henry Fallowfield was then called to produce the letters patent under which Lord Hardwicke, and the other great officers were appointed, when the witness was stopped by the admission of the defendant of the offices being so held by the persons so named in the Information.

Mr. Walter Prober, and Mr. James Elkington were examined by Mr. Dallas and Mr. Abbot, and gave testimony to the purchase of the Weekly Political Register, containing these libels, at Mr. Bagshaw's, in Bow-street, and at Mr. Budd's, another agent of the defendant, at the Crown and Mitre, Pall-mall.

Mr. Adam.—I hope, my lord, I shall be permitted to read parts from the whole correspondence, not only the letters on the affairs of Ireland, Nos. 3 and 4, quoted in the Information, but the whole series of No. 1 to No. 5.

Lord Ellenborough.—You cannot read them unless they are virtually incorporated by some reference.

Mr. Lowten now read in evidence the several passages which will be found in the Information.

MR. CROWE examined by MR. ERSKINE.

Q. Whom do you understand by the Cambridgeshire Earl?

A. Lord Hardwicke.

Q. And whom by the Chancery pleader?

A. Lord Redesdale.

Q. And whom by the junior Judge?

A. Mr. Justice Osborne.

Q. And whom by the clerk in the Secretary's office?

A. Mr. Marsden.

The evidence being closed on the part of the crown, MR. ADAM rose and addressed the Court as follows :

My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury. I have an anxious duty to discharge ; a duty which presses upon me the more heavily, from the circumstance of my not being accustomed, so much as some of my learned friends are, to business of this nature, and from my not having practised, of late years, so much at this bar as in other Courts. And the anxiety I feel has, in no degree, been diminished, from the manner in which the prosecution has been conducted, the way in which so many honourable characters have been introduced and spoken of, and, above all, from the character and situation of the person who has entrusted to me the care of his defence. —Gentlemen, I am sure I shall have your serious attention, when I state to you, that I stand here in behalf of a person, whom, though he is accused of a serious crime, I can describe to you, as a good father, an excellent husband, a virtuous subject of the king, and one who has uniformly, in all his conduct, public and private, in this country and abroad, endeavoured to uphold the true constitution of England, as by law established—a person who is ardently attached to the monarchical frame of this government, and who has repeatedly stepped forward, to the certain loss of his fortune and the risk of his life, to defend the interests of England abroad, and to support the true spirit of the British constitution, and the honour and interests of Britain, at home—a person who, for twelve long years of public life, has never, till the present moment, been once questioned for a libel on the government of any country whatever ; has never, even by the worst of his enemies, been accused of being an advocate for misrule.—When, therefore, the defence of such a man is entrusted to me, I cannot but feel great anxiety. Nor, is that anxiety diminished, by the manner in which the Attorney General thought proper to address you ; nor by those peculiar circumstances of the case, which he stated to you with so much delicacy. Entertaining, as I do, a proper respect for the public characters adverted to in the Information, it be-

comes me to discuss the allegations with freedom, and at the same time, with temper and decorum. I should, however, ill discharge my duty, if I did not enter upon this defence with firmness. And I am sure his lordship will go along with me in saying, that we ought to treat the persons alluded to in the publications, not as private individuals, but as persons composing the government of Ireland. This is the real state of the question you have to try. It is not an Information filed for the personal vindication of the individuals, or for private retribution of justice, but it is to justify public agents, in order to exonerate the Irish government from the charges made or implied in this publication.—Gentlemen, the question then, for you to try, is this, and to which you will apply your minds seriously, What was the intention, *quo animo* was this publication made? It has been stated to you, that this publication was sold so late as Tuesday last; and this was brought for the purpose of shewing the disposition and intention of the person accused.—Gentlemen, the question of intention was, for a long time, excluded from the consideration of the Jury; but since this jurisdiction has been acknowledged by a Declaratory Act, the law has been clearly understood. It took place in the 32nd of his majesty's reign, and is entitled, "An Act to remove Doubts respecting the Functions of Juries in Cases of Libel." This statute enacts and declares, that on every trial for this offence, the Jury may give a general verdict of guilty or not-guilty, upon the whole matter, and shall not be required to find the defendant guilty, merely on proof of publication, but may enter into the sense which the matter alleged to be libellous may correctly bear. You are, therefore, gentlemen, now invested with complete jurisdiction. An investigation of the conduct of public characters is the great and essential privilege of Englishmen. It has been said by Mr. Hume, that this liberty arose with the revolution, and, that, "as our right is founded on this liberty, so will our liberties be lost with this right." The liberty of the press has ever been held as one of the first principles of the constitution; but, the control which the Attorney General

is desirous of putting upon it, would go to extinguish that liberty for ever. The control which he wishes to fetter it with, is this. He says he is no enemy to a fair and free discussion of public characters, provided it be done with decency and decorum. Upon this point I am at issue with the Attorney General. For, if the doctrine here laid down were to be admitted, there would be an end to all vigorous and manly writings. We should henceforward have no standard to appeal to; because, what might appear decent in the opinion of one Attorney General, might appear ungentlemanlike and scurrilous in the opinion of another; and thus, the freedom of discussion relative to public men and public measures would depend, not upon a point of right, but upon the taste of the Attorney General.—Gentlemen, these observations are material for your consideration; they are material on every account; both as applying to that invaluable privilege, the liberty of the press, and as applying, as I hope you will find it apply, to the manly character of the gentleman whose cause I am now pleading. And I trust, after you have heard what I shall have to address to you, you will be of opinion that I have not entertained that hope in vain, but that, in your discernment and justice, I shall have that verdict for the defendant, which will relieve him and his family from the distress which now hangs over them. In the course of what I am about to say, I shall necessarily have to follow the example of the Attorney General, in repeating many of the passages which have been read to you already. This is a duty we all have to discharge here; and I am sure you will listen to them with the attention they deserve. There is not a doubt, and I shall shew it you, that the production complained of was written after one of the most extraordinary and melancholy events that can possibly take place in any country. It originated and is founded upon the calamitous events, which took place in Dublin on the 23rd of July last. It is a description of that event, and was sent for publication to the person who is now under prosecution. Mr. Attorney General says, that, whether Mr. Cobbett is the author, or whether he is merely

spite of the sans culotte principles of the present day. This is, however, an honour that I have no pretension to. All that I can boast of, in my birth, is, that I was born in Old England; the country whence came the men who explored and settled North America; the country of Penn, and of all those, to whom this country is indebted. With respect to my ancestors, I shall go no further back than my grandfather, and for this plain reason, that I never heard talk of any prior to him. He was a day-labourer, and I have heard my father say, that he worked for one farmer from the day of his marriage to that of his death, upwards of forty years." Now, gentlemen, was it proper to insinuate to you, that Mr. Cobbett is a person of excessive vanity, of disgusting ostentation on the topic of his birth? He describes his father as a farmer in moderate circumstances, and himself as one who was destined to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. And you will observe well, gentlemen, that he never has, in any part of his voluminous productions, ever uttered one phrase, expressive of contempt for rank, dignity or birth; but has, on the contrary, always been the champion of the privileged orders, and, of course, the strenuous opposer of every democratical institution,—I beg leave to trouble you, gentlemen, with one more quotation. "People," says Mr. Cobbett, "may say what they please about the misery of the French peasantry, under the old form of government; I have conversed with thousands of those peasants, not one of whom did not regret the change. I have not room here to go into an inquiry into the causes that have led these people to become the passive instruments, the slaves, of a set of tyrants, such as the world never saw before; but, I venture to predict, that sooner or later, they will return to that form of government, under which they were happy, and under which only they ever can be so again." I have read this passage, gentlemen, in order to satisfy you, that Mr. Cobbett is not only the friend of good government in this, but in every other country. Mr. Cobbett is no party writer, but he writes purely from a spirit and principle of his own. And if those

whom he supports, should think proper to take leave of their principles, they would soon find Mr. Cobbett take leave of them. You have before you a person writing on public affairs, without any control. Mr. Cobbett, gentlemen, has no control of purse hanging over him. Whoever may have been the author of the libel in question, Mr. Cobbett in publishing it has not suffered his general character to be injured by it. It is impossible to impute to Mr. Cobbett any deviation from those principles upon which he has uniformly acted.—Now, gentlemen, let us examine a little the publication before us. It consists of a series of letters written on the subject of the insurrection in Ireland of the 23d of July last. The writer avows his object to be “the support of good government in Ireland, and the removal of the present administration.” Now, gentlemen, I humbly submit to you, that this is a fair and legitimate object. I have further to submit to you, that this is not a question of judicial malversation. In those parts of the libel which relate to my Lord Redesdale, there is no ground whatever for drawing that inuendo. You will see that there are two judicial characters introduced, my Lord Redesdale and Mr. Justice Osborne. Throughout the whole publication you will not find any matter stated relating to the distribution of justice. The libel on Mr. Justice Osborne relates entirely to his political and not his judicial character. The whole applies to Mr. Justice Osborne as addressing a grand Jury; and it is well known that addresses to Grand Juries have frequently been made the subject of public animadversion. There is a wonderful difference between calling in question the charge of a Judge to a Grand Jury, and attacking him in the seat of justice.—Gentlemen; the same observations apply generally to my Lord Redesdale.—With respect to Lord Hardwicke, it is almost unnecessary for me to tell you, that what is said of his lordship is entirely in his political character.—I shall now shortly call your attention to the different parts of the libel, but before I do so, I am anxious to make one observation. You will perceive, that the object of this publication is a

public one, that it has for its object the finding fault with the conduct of those who are at the head of the government in Ireland, that it has for its object the removal of that government, and that it expresses an anxious desire that that government should be placed in the hands of those who are able, by their abilities and their firmness, to put a period to the rebellion. In every part of the publication, the conduct of the rebels is held up to the severest reprobation; and when you consider, that the tenor of the publication agrees with the general conduct of the defendant for twelve long years, both in this country and in America, I am sure, gentlemen, you will pause, before you consent to attribute to him the motives with which he is charged in the Information. Gentlemen; the first part of the libel is what relates to my Lord Hardwicke. It represents the head of his Excellency to be a wooden one, and intimates that he is an improper person to be at the head of the Irish government. Now, Mr. Attorney General, tells us, that Ireland is better provided with fleets and with armies, than it ever was at any former period. It may be true, that Ireland has a larger army and more numerous fleets than at any former period, but I submit to you that it is perfectly fair, in a free country like this, to descant on the fitness or unfitness of public men for the situations they hold. It merely says, "you have supplied us with fleets, you have supplied us with armies, but you have not supplied us with a proper person at the head of the government." If we look round to the public characters, we shall find that there has been no minister, or member of parliament who has not, at times, been the object of public animadversion. But in these cases, you are bound to prove the bad disposition with which the libel was written, you are bound to prove the *malus animus* of it. And if we read on, we shall find, in the second extract, that, so far from its deserving to be considered in the light which Mr. Attorney General has stated to you, there cannot be a higher description of any man, than the one here given to my Lord Hardwicke. The writer says, "Inquiry and research are the

duty and the resource of the ignorant, and therefore I did inquire. The result of no small attention bestowed in this pursuit was, that I discovered of our Viceroy, that he was in rank an earl, in manners a gentleman, in morals a good father and a kind husband." Here, then, Lord Hardwicke is held up as having all those good qualities which every one who has the happiness of being acquainted with his lordship are ready to allow him. He goes on to state, "that he had a good library in St. James' Square, and that he further learned from a Mr. Lindsay, that my Lord Hardwicke was celebrated for understanding the modern method of fattening a sheep, as well as any man in Cambridgeshire." I submit to you, gentlemen, that if Lord Hardwicke is merely held up as a feeder of sheep, in addition to all those private virtues, it is impossible for you to say, that the object of this publication is to destroy the government of Ireland. No, gentlemen; it was written with the impression, that Ireland possessing those numerous fleets and those immense armies, ought also to have a person of great political character at the head of her government; and that, as my Lord Hardwicke was not a political character in his own country, he was, therefore, not a proper person to be sent over to Ireland. It means that you ought to have sent over a man, of a political mind, one who, by the powers of that mind, was capable of giving efficacy to all the operations of government. Gentlemen, is not this the plain intent and meaning of the passage? I, therefore, humbly submit to you, that, taken by itself, it can never be supposed to be a libel to the conviction of Mr. Cobbett.—The next passage begins thus: "Suppose that, by some unfortunate combination of events, this little island should be deeply shaken by insurrection within, and should be loudly menaced by invasion from without. Suppose a powerful fleet of the enemies of the British name lay to windward, filled with troops for landing, while a desperate band of ruffians were secretly arming in its bosom, ready to aid the landing of a foreign enemy." Now, gentlemen, I do conjure you to consider attentively

this part of the subject. The writer is supposing Ireland to be deeply shaken by insurrection within, and loudly menaced with invasion without. He then holds them out as a desperate band of ruffians; so that when he contemplates the rebels, he brands them with the epithet of ruffians. The writer then goes on to say: "Suppose in this distress, a committee of West-India proprietors, whose money had been vested in this little island, should apply to Doctor Addington for assistance: and suppose he were to rise up, and to desire them to quiet their apprehensions, for that he had entrusted the care of their island to a very eminent sheep-feeder from Cambridge-shire, who was to be assisted in all his councils by a very able and strong-built chancery pleader from Lincoln's Inn." Now, gentlemen, this certainly is ridicule, and ridicule I contend, is a weapon which may be fairly and honourably employed, especially when it is in the true spirit of English humour, and for an object purely of a public nature. The bestowing of nick-names is a practice to which Englishmen are peculiarly addicted. We have all heard of Carlo Khan with the India-house on his back, and of the Colossus of the North represented with one foot on Berwick bridge, and the other on the Orkneys. In the present instance, Lord Hardwicke is again represented as a person devoted to agricultural pursuits—

Lord Ellenborough.—Do you maintain that a person has a right to ridicule his neighbour?

Mr. Adam.—This is an Information for a public libel, and not for private ridicule.

Lord Ellenborough.—I suppose you have some authority. I do not wish to restrain your arguments, but it is a doctrine which never was and never can be maintained.

Mr. Adam, after going at length into the various passages commented upon by the Attorney General, and contending that they merely contained ridicule, and were written with the fair view of procuring the removal of what the author considered the inefficient servants of the crown, concluded his speech in the following words: Gentlemen, I have now

gone through the several parts of the publication. I know that in your justice and your wisdom you will deal uprightly with my client. In the course of my address to you, I took occasion to allude to the evidence which I should call in behalf of the defendant. I know that evidence can only be received as to general character. But, I trust, in the present case, it will be admissible, in order to rebut the charge of endeavouring to overthrow the government of Ireland. Gentlemen, I shall prove to you by Lord Henry Stewart, who was acquainted with Mr. Cobbett in America, and by several gentlemen of the first respectability, who have known him ever since his return to this country, that the whole tenor of his life has been an adherence to the principles of good government, and to the English cause. Now, gentlemen, of what is Mr. Cobbett accused? Of sending a libel into the world, calculated to overturn the government of Ireland as by law established; and consequently, the species of evidence I am about to produce, must have a considerable effect; *in as much* as it will show, that the defendant is incapable of the crime attributed to him. Gentlemen, I leave the cause *in your hands*, confident that the verdict of an upright Jury of independent Englishmen, will acquit the defendant of the criminality imputed to him, and relieve him and his family from the distress which at present hangs over them.

WITNESSES ON THE PART OF THE DEFENDANT.

MR. LISTON examined by MR. RICHARDSON.

Q. I believe, sir, you held the situation of British minister in America?

A. I did; from the year 1796 to 1800.

Q. Were you personally acquainted with Mr. Cobbett the defendant?

A. I was.

Q. Were you acquainted with his general character and conduct?

A. I was.

Q. From your knowledge on that subject, what was his general character and conduct?

A. Eminently excellent.

Q. What was his general character as to loyalty and attachment to the constitution?

A. That of a zealous defender of the principles of the constitution in all its branches.

Cross-examined by the Attorney General.

Q. Is Mr. Cobbett one of the last men you know who would publish a libel against the government under which he lived?

A. Do you mean with regard to America?

Q. You think, then, that he might be induced to publish a libel against any other government than his own?

A. I cannot answer for that.

Q. Is he not a man likely to libel a government he was not living under?

A. He might be induced to do it. Mr. Cobbett is a gentleman possessing an ardent mind, and he might be induced to libel a government under which he was not living—always excepting his own.

LORD HENRY STEWART examined by MR. RICHARDSON.

Q. I believe your lordship resided with Mr. Liston whilst he was British minister in America?

A. I did.

Q. Were you acquainted with Mr. Cobbett there?

A. I knew him well.

Q. Will your lordship have the goodness to state what you know of him?

A. He is a man the most devotedly attached to the king, the royal family, and to every branch of the constitution.

The RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM WINDHAM examined by MR. RICHARDSON.

Q. How long have you been acquainted with the defendant Mr. Cobbett?

A. Ever since his return to this country, which was, I believe, in 1800.

Q. During that time, what has been your opinion of him with respect to his loyalty and attachment to the constitution?

A. I can speak of him much to the same effect as the last witness. I should consider him as a person of an attachment quite devoted to the king and constitution of this country.

LORD MINTO examined by MR. ADAM.

Q. You have been acquainted, my lord, with the defendant?

A. Ever since my return to this country in 1801.

Q. Will your lordship state what you know of him?

A. I am perfectly satisfied, with the former witnesses, that he is decidedly attached both to the sovereign and the constitution of this country.

The RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES YORKE examined by MR. RICHARDSON.

Q. Have you been long acquainted with Mr. Cobbett?

A. Ever since June 1802.

Q. Are you generally acquainted with his character and conduct?

A. I know some particular instances of his conduct, which induce me to think that he is a zealous supporter of the monarchy and the constitution.

Q. Have any recent instances occurred to support your opinion?

A. The particular instance I allude to, took place previous to July last.

JOHN REEVE, Esq, examined by MR. RICHARDSON.

Q. Are you acquainted with the defendant, Mr. Cobbett?

A. I am.

Q. Have you any particular reasons to be acquainted with his character?

A. I have. I see Mr. Cobbett very frequently. Generally

two or three times a week. I conceive him to be a strong defender of the king and constitution, as by law established.

The evidence being closed on the part of the defendant,

The Attorney General rose in reply, and addressed the Court to the following effect.—I hope, gentlemen, it will not be necessary for me to lengthen out the attention which you have already given to this important subject. I trust, however, I shall be permitted to say a few words in reply to some parts of the speech of my learned friend. No small portion of that speech was taken up with a description of Mr. Cobbett's general character. I have no business here with his general character or past life. I have no business to inquire whether, when living in America, he was a strenuous supporter of the interests of Great Britain. There is not one word of this Information that charges him with a contrary line of conduct. The question is, whether this "ardent-minded man," as Mr. Liston described him, has not been induced to publish an abominable libel against the government of Ireland? Not a tittle of evidence has been brought by those respectable gentlemen who appeared to his character, to prove the contrary; and notwithstanding his having formerly acted upon different principles, I am entitled to say, that if he wilfully and knowingly published the letters in question, he is as gross a libeller as ever came into a court of justice. I stated distinctly, that I was no enemy whatever to a fair discussion of public men and public measures. And if the character of the different governments of this country be considered, I am persuaded it will be found, that the principle of liberality has been extended full as much as at any former period. In saying this, I take no merit whatever to myself. In doing so I was persuaded I was following the line of conduct which was useful both to the government and the people. But, is it to be argued from this, because much has been tolerated, that therefore, a doctrine so monstrous that which my learned friend has laid down should be set upon; namely, that no attack upon government ought to be made the subject of criminal animadversion. I say, this

monstrous proposition; and if it is once supported by the authority of a British jury and British lawyers, it will lead to the absolute destruction of the liberty of the press. Gentlemen, I certainly admit that this free discussion of public measures should be open and uncontrolled, and not subject to the taste of any Attorney General; but I submit to your consideration, whether these passages of ridicule in the publication in question, are libellous or not? the mere circumstance of making any man ridiculous is a decided libel; and is it to be contended, that, because a man is exalted to a public situation, he is, therefore, to be libelled with impunity? If, as I said before, this libel consisted in calling Mr. Addington "Doctor Addington," my Lord Hardwicke "a sheep-feeder," or my Lord Redesdale "a chancery pleader," I never should have thought of troubling you on such an occasion. But when I see the whole administration of a country attacked, individually and personally, and their characters held up to the detestation of the public, I cannot help concluding, that *there is* an intention to do mischief to the government of that country, as well as to the lives of all those, who live under *that* government. With respect to Mr. Justice Osborne, will any one pretend to say, that it was merely in his political character that he was attacked? What does he mean when he says, "I may, I believe, add, what men also say; that if it were possible the ermined robe of the most awful attribute of his majesty, should have been wrapped round the acts of Mr. Marsden, in order to screen them from public disgrace, we might then look for another, but not less fatal end to our liberties, and to our constitution, than that which rebellion or invasion could produce." Is not this a dreadful charge indeed? The following passage is to the same effect: "Whatever the present government may have manifested, the opinion of that government is known to be influenced by motives very different from general justice." Is not this a direct charge, that the present government of Ireland were influenced by motives very different from those of general justice?—With respect to the comparison of the "wooden

horse," and the flippancy of "the sheep-feeder from Cambridgeshire," no man alive can say that a character placed in such an exalted situation by his sovereign, ought to be made the sport of ridicule of this sort. We are told that Mr. Cobbett is very fond of the monarchy; that is to say, he would strip the monarchy of all its officers. This is the way in which this "ardent-minded man," this "moral politician" would support the government!—But, gentlemen, you must not stop here; for the author has not stopped here. He says, that "Lord Kenyon, therefore, as Chancellor, never would have made any rule or order by the effects of which, the secretary of the Master of the Rolls would be deprived of all fees, for the purpose of throwing all those fees into the hands of the secretary to the Chancellor, the better to enable that secretary to discharge the pension of some unknown assistant on his official profits." Meaning thereby, that Lord Redesdale, as Chancellor, has done all this.—My learned friend has passed over the last part of the libel, which insinuates, that Lord Redesdale has "employed his leisure in searching into offices for practices, by which he might harass the domestic arrangements of others, whose pride and integrity would not bend to his views." And how does my learned friend leave this? Why, he says, that you do not know exactly what it means. I suppose, then, that the "*spargere voces in vulgum ambiguas*" are all gone by. But, notwithstanding what my learned friend tells you, I will venture to say, that it is impossible to ascribe to this passage any good meaning, and I trust that you, gentlemen, will have the same sense of its atrocity as I have. What! because Mr. Cobbett has been twelve years before the public without a prosecution; because he has manifested in America and elsewhere a spirit of loyalty, is he to have a complete indemnity for the publication of such gross libels as those before you?—Gentlemen, I shall not trouble you with any further observations. The merits of the case are now before you. If my lord tells you it is a libel, you may still judge of the facts. If you think conscientiously that it is not a libel,

if you think that this is the way that governments are to be treated, you will, of course, acquit the defendant.

Lord Ellenborough.—Gentlemen of the Jury. The evidence on both sides, and the arguments of the counsel being now closed, it remains for us to discharge the respective duties which the laws of the country have cast upon us. I never doubted that an English Jury had the right of judging in these cases, not only of the fact of publication, but also of the nature and construction of the thing published. And the noble person, whose place I so unworthily fill, entertained the same sentiments. The act of parliament which has been alluded to, is merely declaratory, and, had it not passed, I should nevertheless have submitted the whole case to your consideration. On the three following points you have to exercise your judgment: first, the preliminary allegations and innuendoes; next, as to the fact of publication; and, thirdly, the quality and the sense of the thing published. This is the matter at issue. Upon the subject of libel, it may be as well for me to observe, before I enter upon the question, that, by the law of England, there is no impunity to any person publishing any thing that is injurious to the feelings and happiness of an individual, or prejudicial to the general interests of the state. Gentlemen, the law of England is a law of liberty, and, consistently with this liberty, we have not what is called an imprimatur; there is no such preliminary license necessary. But, if a man publish a paper, he is exposed to the penal consequences, as he is in every other act, if it be illegal; and it is illegal, if it tends to the prejudice of any individual. Now, therefore, applying this doctrine to the publication before us, the question for your consideration is, whether this paper is such as would be injurious to the individuals, and whether it is calculated to be injurious to the particular interests of the country? It is no new doctrine, that if a publication be calculated to alienate the affections of the people, by bringing the government into disesteem, whether the expedient be by ridicule or obloquy, the person so conducting himself is exposed to the inflictions

of the law. It is a crime. It has ever been considered as a crime; whether it be wrapped up in one form or in another. The case of the King v. Tutchin, decided in the time of Lord Chief Justice Holt, has removed all ambiguity from this question; and, although at the period when that case was decided, great political contentions existed, the matter was not again brought before the Judges of the Court by any applications for a new trial.

Having said thus much on the general law of libels, let us apply it to the case before us. It has been proved to you, that Mr. Cobbett is the sole proprietor of the publication; that Lord Hardwicke and the other characters mentioned hold the several offices in Ireland attributed to them; and that the publication was sold by Richard Bagshaw, in Bow-street, Covent-garden, both on the days of publication, and also so late down as Tuesday last. The reason of purchasing this second copy on Tuesday last, is to show you, that Mr. Cobbett persevered in the sale of the libels to the very last. Mr. Crowe has proved to you, that by the "Cambridgeshire earl" was meant Lord Hardwicke, and that the appellation of "Chancery Pleader" was intended to designate Lord Redesdale—Gentlemen, the several innendoes in the papers being thus proved, let us a little consider their quality and context. The first paper begins thus: "*Equo ne credite Teucri*, was the advice which, in a dangerous moment, Laocoon gave to the Trojans. It will be remembered that the *equus* against which that sagacious adviser cautioned his countrymen, was a wooden one. His countrymen did not regard Laocoon; they received the *wooden* representative of wisdom; they approached it, as if it possessed authority and power. Its *wooden* head towered above their houses. But though the machine itself was innoxious wood, the credulous Trojans found its hollow head and exalted sides nothing less than receptacles for greedy speculators and blood-thirsty assassins. The ingenious author of the story did not mean to confine the lesson, which it inculcates, to the tale of Troy alone; he meant to take advantage of the easy metaphorical expression,

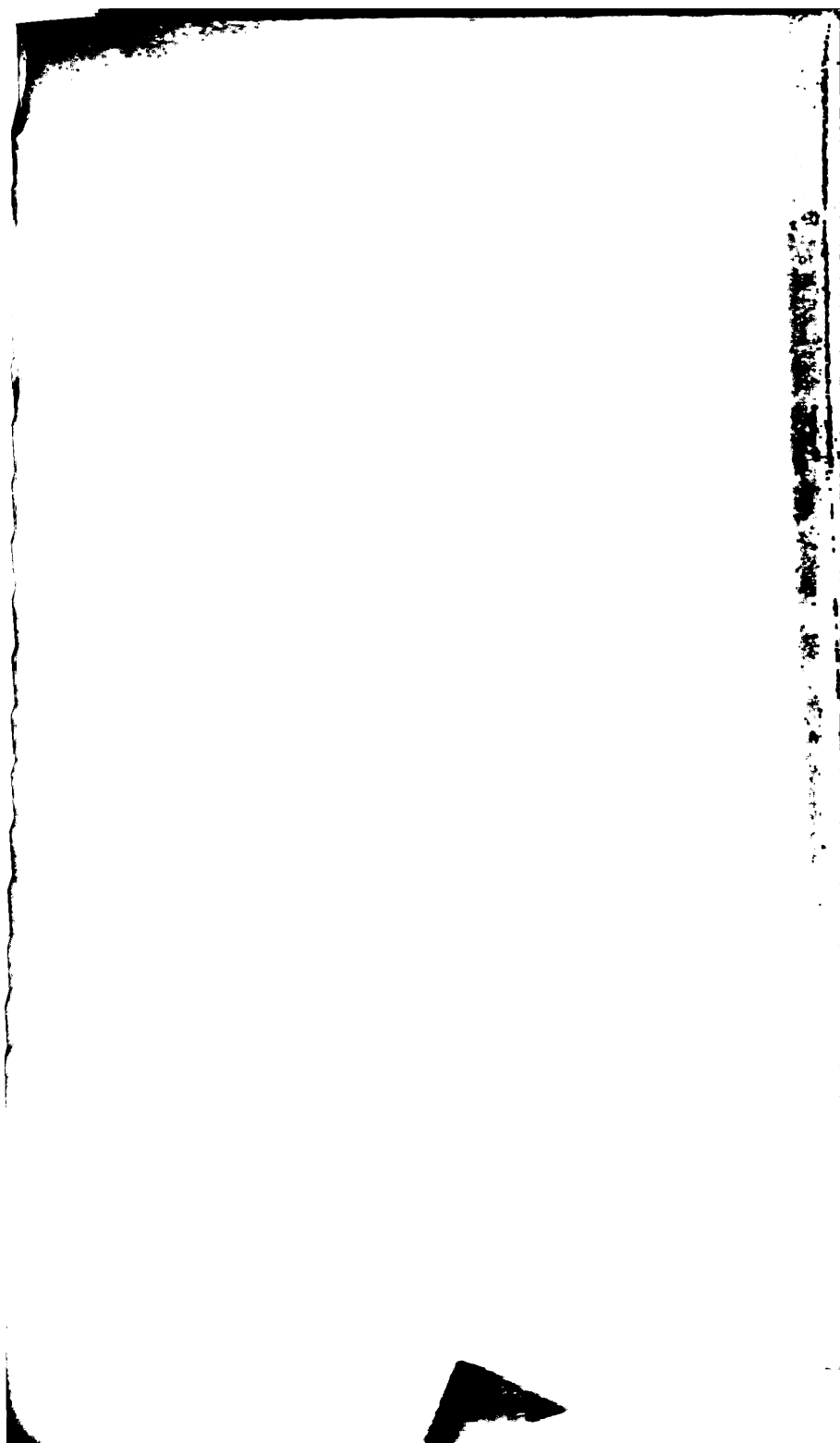
which, by the common assent of mankind, had moulded itself into most languages, and by which a certain species of heads (which the moderns have ascertained to be a non-conductor of ideas) has been denominated a *wooden* head. He meant to caution future nations, not to put trust or confidence in the apparent innocence of any such wooden instrument; and not to suffer themselves to be led to exalt it into consequence, or to pay it any respect." Can there be any other meaning by this, than to impress the people of Ireland with a contemptible opinion of the abilities of Lord Hardwicke? And, gentlemen, if that is the meaning and intention of the publication, it is a libel; for no man has a right to render the person or abilities of another ridiculous. Not only in publications, but if the peace and welfare of individuals or of society, be interrupted, or even exposed, by types and figures, the act, by the law of England, is a libel. Then he goes on to say "that any people who submitted to be governed by a wooden head, would not find their security in its supposed innocuousness, as its hollowness would soon be occupied by instruments of mischief." Submitted! Is not this instigating the people of Ireland to rebellion? For, in what way, but by acts of open violence can they avoid "submitting" to the government which is set over them?

Then he goes on: "When I found, sir, this portion of the kingdom overwhelmed by such consequences to our property, as the rapacity of Mr. Marsden, and his friends, and such consequences to our lives, as the pikes of Mr. Emmett, and his friends, have lately produced; when I could trace all these evils as the inevitable issue from the head and body of such a government as that of Lord Hardwicke, and I am told of his *innocuousness* and his *firmness*, I still reply the story of the *wooden* horse, and I shall still, notwithstanding the fate of Laocoon, raise my voice to my countrymen, and cry, *Equo ne credite Teucri*. Not, sir, that I would be understood literally. I do not mean to assert the head of my Lord Hardwicke is absolutely built of timber. My application, like that of the original author of the tale, is only metaphorical.

Gentlemen, such is the evidence of the publication before you. It is to speak for itself in its plain sense. The question for you to consider, if it can be a question, is, whether these libels (when I call them libels I am anticipating your decision) are capable of any other construction than what has been put upon them? It has been stated of the defendant, that he is a self-taught politician. Gentlemen, no man can write without control. It is necessary he should know, that every man must be controlled by law. It has been observed, that it is the right of the British subject, to exhibit the folly or imbecility of the members of the government. But, gentlemen, we must confine ourselves within limits. If, in so doing, individual feelings are violated, there the line of interdiction begins, and the offence becomes the subject of penal visitation. Evidence to character has been produced on the part of the defendant. But the effect of character is to render the charge doubtful. As to the fact of publication, in the present case there can be no doubt whatever. If you are of opinion that the publications are hurtful to the individuals or to the government, you will find the defendant guilty; if, on the contrary, you consider them neither destructive of the peace of the one or the other, you will acquit him of the charges under this Information.

The Jury, after a pause of about ten minutes, delivered their verdict—*Guilty*.

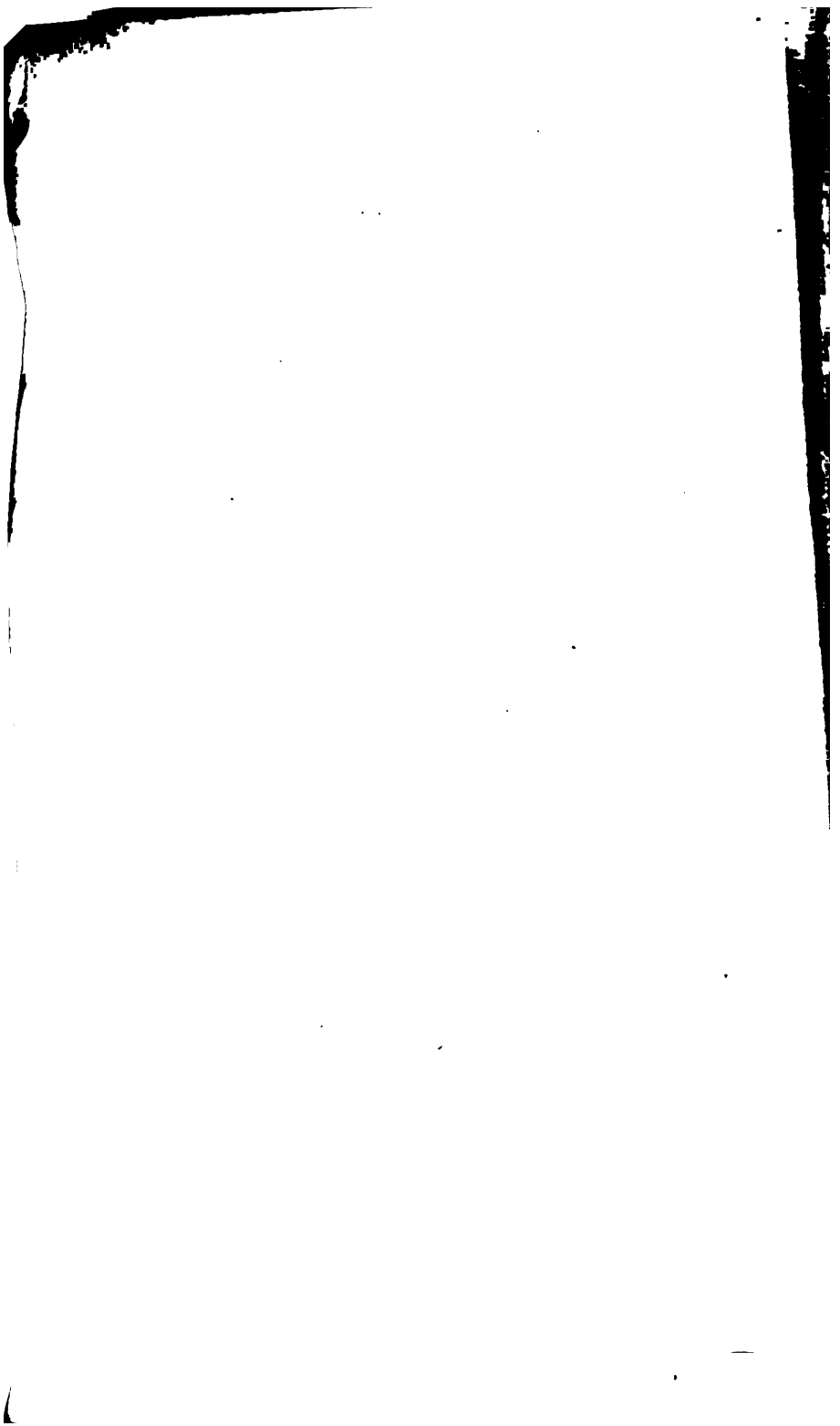
Immediately on the announcement of the verdict, Mr. Cobbett was delivered into the custody of the tipstaff of the Court to be placed in the custody of the marshal of the King's Bench, there to be kept imprisoned until brought up for final judgment, when it was expected that he would be sent to a jail in some distant part of the country.



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The Jury, after a pause of about ten minutes, delivered their verdict—*Guiltily*.

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Engraved by J Rogers from a Drawing by J Chater

HENRY HUNT. ESQ: M.P.

BORN NOV 6 1773

DIED FEB 13 1835

H. Hunt

London. Published for the Proprietors by
J SAUNDERS, 25, NEWGATE STREET, LONDON.

MEMOIRS
OF THE LATE
WILLIAM COBBETT, ESQ^r

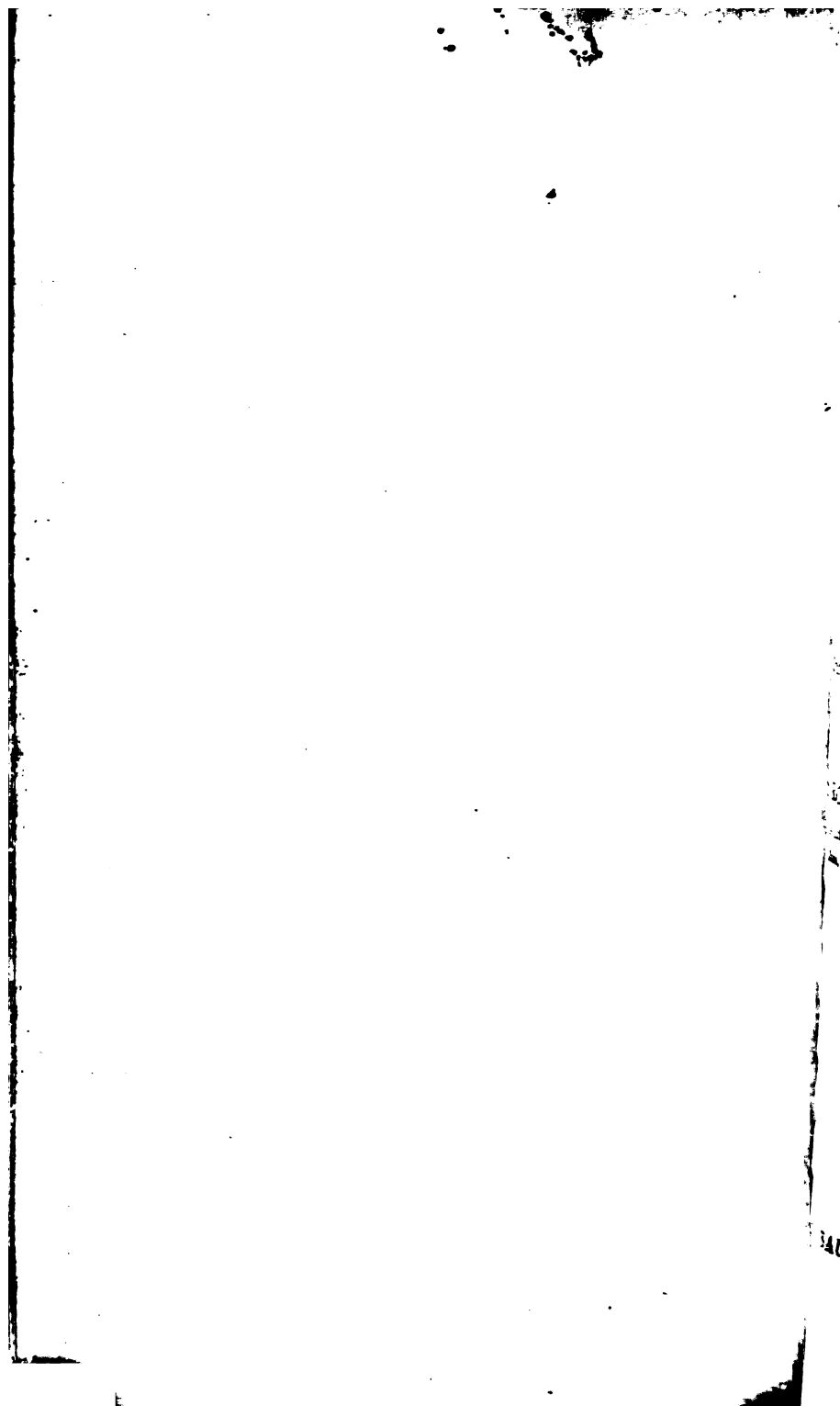
M. P. for Oldham.
FROM
Private and Confidential Sources.

BY
Robert Huish, F. L. S. & L. Soc.



Allegorical Monument to the Memory of William Cobbett.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE PROPRIETORS BY JOHN BAINBRIDGE,
25, NEWGATE STREET. 1835.



MEMOIRS
OF THE LATE
WILLIAM COBBETT, Esq.
M.P. FOR OLDHAM;

EMBRACING
ALL THE INTERESTING EVENTS OF HIS MEMORABLE LIFE,
OBTAINED FROM PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
SOURCES;

ALSO,
A Critical Analysis of his Scientific and Elementary
Writings.

By ROBERT HUISH, Esq. F.L.A. & Z. Soc.

Author of the Life of the late Henry Hunt, Esq.; Last Voyage of Captain Sir John
Ross, for the Discovery of the North West Passage; Travels of
Lander into the Interior of Africa, &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Published for the Proprietors, by
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1836.

MEMOIRS
OF THE LATE
WILLIAM COBBETT, ESQ.

M. P. FOR OLDHAM.

CHAPTER I.

It was a short time previously to the action which was brought against Cobbett, for a libel on Lord Hardwicke and others, that he became personally acquainted with the celebrated Henry Hunt. An occasional correspondence had taken place between them, but as yet they had never entered into a personal communication. In the memoirs of Hunt, we find a description of their first interview, and it is so descriptive of the real character of the man, so full of a display of the eccentricity which so eminently distinguished him from the common herd of mankind, that we are certain our readers will be indebted to us for the amusement which the perusal of it will afford them.

Mr. Hunt at the period of his introduction to Mr. Cobbett, had distinguished himself in the west of England, and particularly at the Bristol election, as a thorough-bred determined reformer; and as Cobbett in his Political Register, advocated the same principles, a correspondence took place between them, from which Mr. Hunt acknowledges that he derived great instruction and information, independently that his Register was made the vehicle, and a powerful one it was,

of giving notoriety to those proceedings at the different elections and meetings, in which Mr. Hunt cut so conspicuous a figure, and in which he was always the foremost, and the most strenuous in the promulgation and defence of liberal principles in the true spirit of the British constitution.

It was on the impeachment of Lord Melville that Cobbett put forth his gigantic powers, crushing with herculean force the hydra head of corruption and political profligacy; and so edified and enlightened was Hunt by his masterly writings, not only on the gross and scandalous act of Lord Melville, but also of his participants in criminality, that he longed to become personally acquainted with the man, who, by the vigour and energy of his writings, appeared to rule the destinies of the country. The Weekly Political Register of Cobbett was universally read, not only in the metropolis but all over the kingdom. His clear, perspicuous, and forcible reasoning upon this transaction, convinced every one who read the Register, he proving to demonstration, that Mr. Pitt had been privy to, and connived at his friend, Lord Melville's delinquency, and it was made evident to the meanest understanding that the public money had been constantly used for private purposes, and to aggrandize the minister's tools and dependants.

Perhaps no circumstance could have happened more opportunely for the leaders of the reform party, than the detection of the glaring peculations of Lord Melville and his friend Trotter, who from being a comparatively needy man, became on a sudden possessed of immense wealth, clandestinely extracted from the pockets of the people. Hunt, though by no means a powerful writer, far outshone Cobbett as a public speaker, he having a peculiar manner of working upon, and rousing the passions of his audience, beyond, perhaps, what any other man ever possessed. The cause, therefore, which Cobbett espoused as a writer, and Hunt as an orator, possessed in those individuals alone, such a tower of strength that nothing could stand against it, and it therefore became the desire of Hunt to establish that personal intimacy between them, that

an effectual co-operation might be established between them, and such plans arranged, that like two hounds, they might hunt their game in couples, and little chance indeed had the individuals whom they had determined to run down.

Mr. Hunt thus describes his first interview with Cobbett :

“ As I had taken a conspicuous part at the Wiltshire county meeting, I called on Mr. Cobbett the first time that I went to London after it had occurred, as I was desirous to obtain a personal interview with a man who had afforded me so much pleasure by his writings, and who had weekly given me so much useful information as to politics and political economy. He lived in Duke-street, Westminster, where on my arrival I sent in my name. I was shown into a room *unfurnished*, and as far as I can recollect, *without a chair in it*. After waiting some time the great political writer appeared ; a tall, robust man, with a florid face, his hair cut quite close to his head, and himself dressed in a blue coat and scarlet cloth waistcoat ; and as it was then very hot weather, in the middle of summer, his apparel had to me a very singular appearance. I introduced myself as a gentleman from Wiltshire, who had taken the lead at the county meeting, the particulars of which I had forwarded to him. He addressed me very *briefly* and very bluntly, saying ‘ that we must persevere, and we should bring all the scoundrels to justice.’ He never asked me to sit down—” but the truth must be spoken, we do not see how Mr. Hunt could take umbrage at this apparent neglect, for having previously informed us that there was no chair in the room, had Mr. Hunt been invited to sit down, it must have been on the floor, and if Mr. Cobbett had seated himself by his side, they must have carried on their *conference à la musselman*, and a delectable subject would it have proved for the caricaturist to sketch the two great politicians in their humble posture.

“ I departed,” continues Mr. Hunt, “ not at all pleased with the interview, I had made up my mind for a very different sort of a man ; and to tell the truth, I was very much disappointed by his appearance and manners, and mortified at

the cool reception which he gave me. As I walked up Parliament-street, I mused upon the sort of being I had just left, and I own that my calculations did not in the slightest degree lead me to suppose that we should ever be upon such friendly terms, and indeed upon such an intimate footing, as we assuredly were for a number of years afterwards. It appeared to me, that at our first meeting, we were mutually disgusted with each other, and I left his house with the determination, in my own mind, never to seek a second interview with him. I thought that of all the men I ever saw, he was the least likely for me to become enamoured of his society. The result was, nevertheless, quite the reverse, we lived and acted for many years with the most perfect cordiality, and I believe that two men never lived that more sincerely, honestly, and zealously advocated public liberty than we did hand in hand, for eight or ten years. Although it would perhaps be impossible to point out two men more different in many respects than we are to each other, yet in pursuing public duty for so many years together there never were two men, who went on so well together, and with such trifling difference of opinion as occurred between Mr. Cobbett and myself. It was, however, some years after this before we became intimate. I constantly read his Political Register with unabated admiration and delight, for even at this time he surpassed, in my opinion, any other political writer.

"I was, as I have already said, a constant reader of Cobbett's Register, and although I had been rather disgusted with the man at my first interview with him, yet I was quite enraptured with the beautiful productions of his pen, dictated by his powerful mind."

With great truth indeed might Mr. Hunt declare that no two individuals, although agreeing in the great political questions, were yet in their dispositions so opposite to each other. With all the faults which Mr. Hunt possessed (and let him who is without a fault throw a stone at him,) there was an open, straight-forward manliness of character about him, which was in a certain degree foreign to that of Cobbett, and

there was an innate pride, a noble sense of honour about him, which would not let him stoop to a mean or pitiful action. Cobbett on the other hand cared not to what length he went, so that he could humble the individual, who had by any means rendered himself obnoxious to him. There was not in Cobbett a particle of the enthusiasm or the disinterestedness of friendship; his eye was directed solely to self, and in that self was centred all his aims and pursuits; it was the nucleus round which all his actions revolved, and to bring them to a successful issue, it was in a comparative degree indifferent to him as to the injury which it might inflict upon another. We may be considered as being severe in these strictures on the character of Cobbett, but in reference to Mr. Hunt alone, we shall have several opportunities of confirming the truth of the remark, and of showing that there existed a duplicity in his character, which ill assorted with the open ingenuous character of Hunt. The latter was rising fast in importance in the political world, and as there is no occasion for the existence of two suns in heaven, so Cobbett thought there was no necessity for the existence of the Gemini in the zodiac of politics, he himself being, according to his own opinion, all-sufficient to direct the minds of the English people, and to impel them on to the attainment of those measures, which the great political leaders of the day had in view. Cobbett thought he perceived in Hunt a formidable rival, in acquiring that influence over the people, which it was his wish to engross to himself; and although in vigour of mind, and in intellectual energy, the former might surpass the latter, yet, perhaps no man has existed in England, as a public speaker, or as he has been sarcastically styled, a mob-orator, who knew how to work upon the feelings of a crowd better than Hunt. In this respect he was by far the superior of Cobbett, although as a writer, he never could compete with him. Hunt indeed possessed one superiority over Cobbett, and that was a classical and liberal education; Cobbett was in every respect a self-educated man, more so perhaps than any other public character that ever existed, but the difference in these

two essential points of character was never more apparent, than in the exhibition which those two individuals made in the exercise of their respective talents. Hunt was a most incorrect writer, but a good and a florid speaker; Cobbett was one of the most, if not the most energetic and powerful writers of his own or any other times, in his oratory, the workings of a great and splendid mind frequently exhibited themselves, but they came upon us like the coruscations of Heaven, rendering the after-gloom more perceptible. Cobbett sought to accomplish his object by downright main force, he dealt his arguments around him with the power of the sledge hammer; what he could not wield, he crushed, or reduced it to a shapeless mass. Hunt, on the contrary, adopted a more free and conciliating tone, he applied himself more to the *suaviter in modo*, although in a manner peculiarly his own, and he won his way to the hearts of his audience by the most apt illustrations, and a happy display of wit and humour, which Cobbett would not condescend to use, or which, more properly speaking, he did not know the use of. A mob was the element in which Hunt delighted to breathe and move; Cobbett hated a mob, and of all mobs, an English mob; the concentrated force, however, of two such men, if mind be the standard of the man, might have driven a nation to the verge of a revolution, or have raised in it an enthusiasm of patriotism, which would have impelled it to deeds of the noblest enterprise in defence of their laws, their constitution, and their rights.

At the time when Mr. Cobbett was committed to the custody of the marshal of the King's Bench, preparatory to the passing of his sentence, it happened that Mr. Hunt was then confined in the same prison, under a sentence of the court for an assault committed on a man of the name of Stone; and he no sooner heard that Mr. Cobbett was at the marshal's house, where he was waiting until some accommodation could be procured for him in the prison, than he hastened to him, and offered his apartments in the prison for the use of Mr. Cobbett and his family, until he could suit himself to his liking. Mr. Cobbett accepted the offer, and it may be said

that the King's Bench prison now contained two of the most extraordinary men of the times in which they lived. Mr. Cobbett seemed to be perfectly conscious of his superiority, and was in consequence too prone to look down upon others with rather an unbecoming degree of disdain. On the other hand, Mr. Hunt allowed his character to speak for itself; he made no parade, no ostentation of the great talents which he possessed, and as the display was not done with design, the effect was the more forcible. There was also a reserve attached to the character of Cobbett, descending almost to surliness, which was wholly foreign to that of Hunt; the former was very willing to *receive* an act of kindness, the latter was very willing to *grant* it, and herein lay the distinctive marks of their respective characters. Mr. Hunt, from an innate generosity of disposition, took a pleasure in obliging a friend, even to the detriment of his own personal interests: Hunt would run to any extreme to save a friend. Mr. Cobbett would ponder long before he moved a step, and then he would not move at all, if the consequences were likely to affect his own interest. It was generally admitted that Mr. Cobbett fulfilled with the most laudable propriety the relations of father and husband, but the relation of a friend was wholly unknown to him.

During the few days that Mr. Cobbett remained in the King's Bench, intervening between the trial and the sentence, he was violently attacked by some of the writers belonging to the public press, who accused him of having offered to compromise with the government by giving up his Register, and undertaking to write no more upon politics. Amongst this number was Mr. Leigh Hunt, of the Examiner; and in the enthusiasm of his zeal for the character of his *calumniated* friend, Henry Hunt took up the cudgels, and condemned in the most unqualified terms, all those who had been guilty of such base conduct as that of falsely accusing a man at such a moment as that, which he held to be a political crime of the deepest die. Mr. Hunt found, however, that in espousing the cause of his friend, he had drawn a nest

of hornets about him, and he began to reflect, whether it would not have been more prudent in him to have left Mr. Cobbett to fight his own battles, seeing that he was so able, having the power of the press in his hands, which Mr. Hunt had not, and not allow himself to be bedaubed and bespattered with all the feculent matter which the editors of the papers could collect to throw at him. If Mr. Cobbett, *for some reasons best known to himself*, did not think it worth his while to justify himself from the attacks of his enemies, it would only have been liberal in him to have prevented a zealous and disinterested friend from exposing himself to *unpleasant circumstances*, in a cause in which he was the principal, but in the defence of which he appeared to have no objection that other persons should come off with broken heads, provided he kept his own safe and uninjured. It is also worthy of remark, that Mr. Hunt was fighting the battles of an individual, who had never deigned to inform him whether the charges, which were brought against him were not actually founded in truth. It was not believed by Mr. Hunt, that Cobbett could possibly commit such a political crime as to tamper with government, for the purpose of avoiding the punishment which awaited him; but although Mr. Hunt was daily and hourly in communication with Mr. Cobbett during his short residence in the bench, yet the latter possessed not either the candour or the ingenuonsness to deny in the most positive terms the truth of the allegations brought against him, but left his friend exposed to the most violent and virulent attacks both in a personal and political character, on the mere supposition, that he could not possibly be guilty of the charge imputed to him. The eyes of Mr. Hunt were, however, first opened to the impolicy of his conduct, by Mr. Peter Finnerty, who strenuously advised him to take care of himself, and to leave Cobbett to do the same. This advice was taken, and Mr. Hunt subsequently discovered that he had been led away by an enthusiastic disposition to befriend the oppressed, without at the moment stopping to inquire whether the object were worthy of it.

On the 9th July Mr. Cobbett was brought up for judgment for the libel on Lord Hardwicke, and sentenced to two years imprisonment in Newgate, to pay a fine of £1000 to the king, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years. Severe as this sentence was in many instances, yet it possessed this alleviation, that he was not, as was strongly suspected he would have been, removed to a distant prison, and thereby deprived of all intercourse with his family, as well as proving of the most serious injury to his literary and professional pursuits.

The arm of the law had, however, reached him, and although the blow was tremendous, and might have been deemed all-sufficient for the purpose required, yet it was quickly followed by another, which in a pecuniary point of view threatened to crush Mr. Cobbett altogether. This was a civil action brought by Mr. Plunkett, solicitor-general for Ireland, against Mr. Cobbett, contained in the same article in the Weekly Register in which had appeared the libels on Lord Hardwicke, Mr. Justice Osborne, and Mr. Marsden. It is perhaps impossible to produce a stronger instance of the vindictive spirit, which then actuated the imbecile administration of this country under such men as Addington, and Perceval, whose relatives are now doubly and trebly pensioned on the public purse, than the prosecutions which were carried on against Mr. Cobbett. It might have been supposed that, however nice and sensitive an individual might be in regard to his character, yet, that as strong and efficient means had been already adopted to purify that character from imputation of any base or criminal act which had been attached to it, that the party would have remained satisfied, and not to have carried their vindictive spirit to such an excess, as to ruin for ever the prospects of the offending individual, and consign himself and his unoffending family to actual penury. It is far from our wish to extenuate the conduct of the professed and systematic libeller, but as long as the British constitution is in force, the people living under that constitution have a political right vested in them, to canvass the conduct of their

rulers, and to expose every instance of mal-administration, such as the appointment of unfit or unworthy persons to fill the high offices of state, and to employ every legal and constitutional step for the removal of those persons, by whose incompetency and ignorance the dearest interests of the country are threatened to be sacrificed. The guardian genius of England must have been asleep, when the destinies of this great and powerful empire were entrusted in the hands of the present Lord Sidmouth, *et-devant*, Doctor Addington, and we find that the same principle operates in political life as in the moral one; for in the latter, we generally find that the most rotten and questionable characters are the most vindictive and malignant when any attack is made upon them; the pure and upright character enshrines itself in the consciousness of its unsullied purity and integrity, it treats with contempt the innocuous attempts of the unprincipled slanderer; whilst on the other hand, the individual who is sensible that his character is full of flaws, puts on the semblance of extreme indignation towards any one, who can presume to hold them up to the inspection of the public. So was it situated with the political characters at the head of his majesty's government in the year 1804. The vessel of the state was navigated by men, who knew not how to steer it according to the commonest principles of constitutional polity. Corruption sat at the helm, imbecility directed the course, and the sails by which the vessel was impelled, were filled by the blasts of royalty, aristocracy, and episcopacy. If then some old experienced pilot, foreseeing the danger which impended over the vessel, and that from ignorance of the helmsman, it was running direct for the rocks of ruin and anarchy, should boldly step forward, and proclaim aloud to the nation the weakness and amoecility of the navigators, he was to be attacked immediately by a blood-hound in the shape of an attorney-general, who was to prostitute his talents and his power in attempting to prove the fitness and ability of those persons to whom the navigation of the state vessel was intrusted, although such qualities could not be discovered by any one, who contributed

to the support and the equipment of the vessel, and who consequently possessed a voice in the election of the pilot, to whom the management of it was to be entrusted.

The severe sentence of the Court of King's Bench had safely lodged Mr. Cobbett within the walls of his majesty's gaol of Newgate, and so far the ministers of that same majesty were satisfied. It was not therefore considered necessary to bring a criminal action on the part of Mr. Plunkett, but to bring a civil one, that is, that the character of Mr. Plunkett was to be put into one scale, and the pounds, shillings and pence of Mr. Cobbett in the other, any deficiency in the sterling weight of the former, to be made good by the sterling pounds of the latter. We know not the maximum at which in those times a public character was rated, but the deficit in the character of Mr. Plunkett, as alleged by Cobbett in his Weekly Register, must have been enormous, when he laid the damages which the said character had received by the stabs and wounds inflicted on it by Mr. Cobbett, at the very moderate sum of £10,000.

The trial came on in the Court of King's Bench, on the 26th May 1804, before Lord Ellenborough and a special jury. The counsel for the plaintiff being Mr. Erskine, Mr. Garrow, Mr. Dampier, and Mr. Nolan. The counsel for the defendant, Mr. Adam, and Mr. Richardson.

The Information contained three counts, which, being nearly similar in their wording to those in the Information in the cause of Lord Hardwicke, we shall purposely omit, and proceed immediately to the speech of Mr. Erskine, which, as containing some important points relative to the character and genius of Mr. Cobbett, we recommend to the careful study of our readers.

The declaration having been read, Mr. Erskine addressed the Court and Jury as follows :

My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury.—Independently of the pannel annexed to the record, which enabled me to see that I was before the same jury who, the day before yesterday, tried the defendant for a libel on his majesty's government of

Ireland, I could not help observing, from my familiarity with your features, that I was in that situation ; a situation which the defendant could have prevented, had he thought proper, because, being called upon to answer in an action for slander, it was in his power to have selected another jury, either by a particular application to the court, or by availing himself of his right to expunge from the pannel the names of any persons whom he might dislike. But, gentlemen, I am not sure that he has not made a prudent choice, in having the same persons to try him a second time ; because it affords him the opportunity of introducing himself to your attention by the character which has been given him with regard to his talents, his education, his morals, and his attachment to the constitution of the country. So far, therefore, am I from wishing you to forget that the defendant is not a low, obscure, contemptible, and uninteresting individual, I am rather desirous that you should contemplate him, as he has been described by his counsel, a gentleman of great talents, possessing the advantage of a powerful and energetic mode of expressing his sentiments in writing ; one who well knows how to wield that useful weapon, the pen—that weapon so dangerous when not restrained by morality and by law ; one who, having raised himself from humble parentage by his intellectual endowments, ought to have recollected, that others who had done the same, were as jealous as himself of their fair fame, reputation, and esteem of the world.—Gentlemen, the defendant, Mr. Cobbett, is called upon to answer for part of the same libel which was laid before you the other day, at the instance of the crown ; for by the mode of libelling which Mr. Cobbett has adopted, he takes care to throw far and wide his slander, and has thereby rendered it necessary for an individual who has been grievously calumniated, to come forward in vindication of himself against an attack upon his character, through the medium of the magistracy, and the situation which he holds as solicitor-general of that part of the United Kingdom, called Ireland. It is not for me to enter into the considerations which determined you in your former verdict.

but I confess, it appeared extraordinary to me to hear it stated by the defendant's counsel, that the libel was dictated by a regard for his majesty's government in Ireland, and a zeal for the constitution of the country, when, at the same time, the author describes that part of the United Kingdom as brought into peril by sedition and rebellion, and shaken to its centre by intestine commotions; and by way of curing that strife and discord, represents his sovereign, whom he professes to love, but whom he cannot love, if he is guilty of the libel before you, as employing his executive authority at this awful juncture, in selecting persons who, so far from having the capacity to govern a country, are not fit to be constables for the meanest parish. Because a person in Lord Hardwicke's situation chooses to devote his leisure hours to agricultural pursuits, Mr. Cobbett represents him as a nobleman, "having a good library in St. James' Square, and celebrated for understanding the modern method of fattening a sheep as well as any man in Cambridgeshire." He takes the same liberty with another noble lord, with whom we are all well acquainted. I mean my Lord Redesdale; who is represented as "a very able and strong-built chancery pleader from Lincoln's-Inn." Now, gentlemen, is it a disgrace to a man to be a feeder of sheep in Cambridgeshire, or a chancery pleader? Yet, in this strain of ridicule does Mr. Cobbett treat them, for the purpose of making the world believe, that they are unfit persons for the situation their sovereign has called them to fill. In this way he thinks fit to stab, and destroy, the character of these noblemen, and to inflict such a wound, such a dastardly and malignant wound, that I should change my opinion of you, gentlemen, and I should be sorry to do so, after so many years acquaintance with most of your countenances, if, after hearing what I shall have to address to you, you could suffer such a libeller to go out of this court unpunished,—Gentlemen, this is a civil action; I therefore trust you will not suffer your minds to be distracted by those important considerations of the liberty of the press, which have so often agitated parliament and courts of justice. It

would ill become me to say any thing against that sacred privilege; seeing that I consider it as almost the only honour of my humble life, that I took an active part in framing the statute for its protection, and assisted the eminent statesmen who brought that law into parliament, which was referred to on the former trial, and so ably commented upon by my learned friend Mr. Adam. The reason of that law was this: it never was disputed, it never can or will be disputed, that a man is entitled to that tranquillity, happiness, and peace of mind, which is the result of an honourable reputation, provided his conduct in life entitles him to it. There is implanted in every man's bosom an invincible sensibility to the opinion of his fellow creatures, which nothing can destroy. It is the foundation of all patriotism, the sentiment which rears states from infancy to maturity, the principle that makes eminent men struggle for distinction, and keeps them in the straight paths of their duty when called to the high offices of magistracy; therefore, the laws of society protect mankind in this dearest of all human blessings; and, if any man writes of another that which is injurious to him in his trade, profession, or character, or which tends to expose him to penalties, or brings him into contempt, all this is libellous, and the law deems it an object of penal animadversion. But, to use the language of my Lord Chief Justice Holt, a man peculiarly a friend to the liberty of the press, "words tending to scandalize magistrates or persons in public trust, are more injurious than when spoken against private men," and for this obvious reason, that magistrates are placed on a pinnacle to which the public attention is directed; they know that the public have a right to call on them for an account of their conduct; whereas private men are known only among the circles of their own families or immediate friends. In the case before you, my client is attacked not only as a private individual, but as a magistrate also; it is, however, necessary, that in appealing for satisfaction, he should come into this court erect in his integrity, and conscious of his innocence. If he is the man

Mr. Cobbett has represented him, it was for the defendant to have justified the libel and to have proved it. But all this he has not so much as attempted to do. Had he done so, I would rather die than hold communion with an abandoned, profligate wretch, such as my client is here represented to be. It never can have been said, that it was other than a question of law, what was a libel which brought a man into contempt? it is a question of fact whether it has been written, and the meaning and intention of the author are also a question of fact. With respect to libels which have a tendency to bring the government into contempt, the question of the law is mixed with fact, upon which the judge is to give the general principles, leaving the jury to draw their own conclusions. It was not Lord Mansfield who first departed from this rule; it had been departed from by judges before his time for so long a series, that his lordship considered juries, the moment the publication was proved, without any jurisdiction to consider its tendency, but bound to return their verdict for the crown: The consequence of this was, that libellers became popular. They made use of the office of jury as a stalking horse to cover iniquity; and it thereby became easy to confound the most essential and substantial privileges of the people with the worst offences. To remedy this evil, the libel bill was brought in. It was a great satisfaction to my mind, to hear so eminent a person as the noble lord now on the bench, declare to you the other day, that, independently of this law, its principle is the one which he should have adopted. In the present case, I must first prove that the defendant published the libel; but, I shall not expect that you will give damages, unless I also prove, that this libel is of the most malignant, injurious, and destructive nature; that it might lead in its probable consequences to the premature death of the unfortunate person, my client, and that, at all events, it strikes most deeply at his honour. Before the publication of this libel, Mr. Robert Emmett, the son of an eminent physician in Ireland, and brother to a barrister, had mixed himself abroad with seditious persons, who had filled his mind with an enthusiastic notion,

that the interest and happiness of Ireland could only be effected by a separation from Great Britain. He directed all his views to the attainment of this purpose. He avowed his design, he gloried in it when the sword of justice was lifted up against him; and when he was asked by the judge, why judgment should not be passed on him, he entered into a declaration of his principles, and avowed his determination to die in defence of them. Lord Norberry, before whom he was tried, fearful of allowing him to avail himself of his situation to foment rebellion, interrupted the unfortunate young man more than once. Highly as every one must approve the conduct of the noble lord, it is, nevertheless, to be lamented, that it should have become necessary to have interrupted him; for, gentlemen, what will you say, when I tell you, that, to the confusion of this libeller, this unfortunate young man, after he retired, made this declaration, "that such had been the mildness of the government of Lord Hardwicke," of which the defendant has spoken with such contempt, because the father of the late minister was a doctor—such, I say, had been its mildness, "that he was obliged to push on the catastrophe that took place, lest there should have been an end of rebellion, by the causes of it having ceased." Mr. Emmett, after he had been prevented from doing any more mischief, so far from complaining that he had been insulted by my client, Mr. Plunkett, openly acknowledged that it was the wisdom, the moderation, the forbearance, the prudence, and the virtue of the government of Lord Hardwicke, that were dissolving rebellion and the spirit of it, like enchantment, by working in secret on the minds of a noble-minded people. Mr. Emmett could not wait, for fear the people should be divested of their insane prejudices. They were induced to return to their duty and their allegiance, in the same manner as the fog is dispersed at the rising of the sun, not from its heat, but the benignity of its beams. Lord Hardwicke, gentlemen, has governed Ireland in a most excellent manner. I have some reason to be acquainted with his private character, as his lordship married one of my

nearest relations. He has conducted himself in Ireland with such mildness, that a change in the minds of people has already begun to take place. It is not by long speeches that the ruler of a nation discovers his ability to govern; it is not by *sesquipedalla verba*, nor by high-sounding eloquence. In Ireland particularly, from circumstances which have occurred, the people of that country require to be restrained with a delicate hand. Mr. Burke once said, speaking of America, "you should send her the angel of peace, but instead of the angel of peace, you are sending her the destroying angel." The high characters, to whom I allude, appear to have adopted with respect to Ireland, what the great Lord Chatham so well recommended when speaking of America.

"Be to her faults a little blind,
Be to her virtues ever kind,
Let all her ways be uncondem'd;
And clap the padlock on your mind."

By acting upon this principle, the government of Ireland was daily reconciling the affections of the people; so much so, that Mr. Emmett thought, if he deferred his scheme of insurrection, it would be difficult at a future day to bring them up to the pitch of disaffection which was necessary to its success. The attempt was accordingly made. The result it is unnecessary for me to state. Mr. Plunkett, the plaintiff, was employed to assist the Attorney General in the prosecution against Mr. Emmett; and the case was so clear, that the counsel who was engaged for that unhappy person did not call any witnesses to protect him. My Lord Norberry was of opinion, that this did not prevent the counsel for the crown from making observations to the jury. My client was far from desiring to treat with contempt or insult a man who was about to suffer death. I do say, and Mr. Cobbett was at liberty to prove the contrary, if he could have done so, that Mr. Plunkett availed himself of this useful opportunity to warn others from the fate of this wretched young man. He told them, that if they expected France to assist them in the forming of their republic, they would find themselves

dreadfully deceived; that the time was not far off when they would see that their leader was actuated by nothing but ambition, by a desire to aggrandize his own family, and a total forgetfulness of every thing that had animated the mind of the great Washington. Was not this the duty of the counsel of the crown? This is what Mr. Plunkett did. This is what I should have done in a similar situation. He made such observations as were calculated to redeem the people of Ireland to a love of their country and of its government. It was not with a view to Mr. Emmett alone that he addressed the jury, but that the scaffold might not bleed in vain.—Gentlemen, I am by no means desirous of calling in question the high character which was given of Mr. Cobbett on a former day; but if he be the lover of his country, which he has been described to you, he must shew his attachment by obedience to its laws. The defendant has not merely thrown out the *ambiguas voces*, but, day after day, this lover of the king's government has been writing and sending forth his libels into that distracted country. It is no defence to say, that Mr. Cobbett is an admirer of the king and constitution, if he is constantly libelling the ministers of that king and transgressing the laws of that constitution. It is nothing for a man to say, "I believe in the merits of my Saviour, I respect my religion and my God," if he is hourly in the practice of breaking the ten commandments. The defendant does not fall into sin from the infirmities of his nature. The Saviour of man has said, "by their fruits ye shall know them," and by the libels which I am about to read to you, you will be enabled to judge of Mr. Cobbett. Although, as I have shewn to you, Mr. Emmett had not the least idea of complaining of harsh treatment on the part of my client towards him, the defendant has nevertheless thought proper to publish the following most scandalous libel: "If any one man could be found, of whom a young but unhappy victim of the justly offended laws of his country, had, in the moment of his conviction and sentence, uttered the following apostrophe:—'That viper, whom my father nourished! He

it was from whose principles and doctrines, which now, by their effects, drag me to my grave; and he it is, who is now brought forward as my prosecutor, and who, by an unheard-of exercise of the prerogative, has wantonly lashed, with a speech to evidence, the dying son of his former friend, when that dying son had produced no evidence, had made no defence, but on the contrary, acknowledged the charge, and submitted to his fate.' Lord Kenyon would have turned with horror from such a scene, in which, although guilt was in one to be part punished, yet in the whole drama justice was confounded, humanity outraged, and loyalty insulted." Now, gentlemen, what can be said of a man worse than this? My Lord Coke, with all his great fame, never has outlived, and never will outlive, the memory of the manner in which he treated Sir Walter Raleigh in a court of justice. So revolting was his conduct upon this occasion, that it stands like a blot upon his escutcheon. The conduct imputed to the plaintiff would have been brutal, even if Mr. Emmett had been a perfect stranger to him, instead of the "dying son of his former friend." But, the assertion is false, or Mr. Cobbett might have proved it. Was Mr. Cobbett present when Mr. Emmett made use of these words? And, if not, where had he his authority? Has he any right to insert in his papers, what renders me the object of universal horror and detestation? No crime can be more detestable, than that which the plaintiff is here charged with; that he had "instilled into the mind of this young man, principles which, by their effects dragged him to his grave; and that, by an unheard-of exercise of prerogative he had wantonly lashed, with a speech to evidence, the dying son of his former friend, when that dying son had produced no evidence, had made no defence, but, on the contrary, had acknowledged his charge, and had submitted to his fate." He goes on to say, that "Lord Kenyon would have turned with horror from such a scene, in which, although guilt was in one part to be punished, yet, in the whole drama, justice was confounded; humanity outraged, and loyalty insulted." Gentlemen, is this true? Did Mr.

Cobbett believe it to be true when he published it? But, notwithstanding this, he sells these libels to this very hour; he sells them in volumes, the more effectually to blast the character of this man to future times. But Mr. Adam tells you, that his client is a man of strong powers of mind; that he writes from a spirit and principle of his own; that he raised himself to his present respectable situation by unwearied industry; that he was the son of a farmer, and the grandson of a day labourer; that he is self-taught in the grammar of his native language, and knows how to use that language with acuteness and precision. All these qualifications I am ready to allow Mr. Cobbett, and over and above these qualifications I give him the merit of having published this libel; which I will venture to say is one of the most clever, as well as one of the most wicked efforts of his genius.—Gentlemen, there is nothing so popular in England as a judge. The people of England love their laws, and love their judges. But what does this artful libeller do? Under the mask of praising my Lord Kenyon, and telling us what that noble lord would have done in such and such situations, he seizes the opportunity it affords him, of sending forth against the plaintiff, Mr. Plunkett, one of the most abominable libels that ever was brought into a court of justice.—Gentlemen, upon the subject of damages, I contend, the injury the plaintiff has received is one of those which it is almost impossible to compensate by money. I beseech you to make the plaintiff's case your own, and by that standard appreciate what he ought to recover. A jury cannot “minister to a mind diseased,” but it can, and I trust will, by an honest verdict, give ample reparation to the gentleman so basely injured, and thereby proclaim the justice of the British law.

The libel goes on to say: “Lord Kenyon must have known that a noble duke, for having toasted at a drunken club, in a common tavern, to a noisy rabble, ‘*the sovereignty of the people*,’ was struck by his majesty’s command out of the Privy Council, and deprived of all his offices both civil

and military." Gentlemen, this is a libel upon the Duke of Norfolk. This libeller is not satisfied with employing single ball, but cannister, grape shot, old nails, every thing is brought into his battery, and hurled around, so as to do the utmost possible mischief. Here is a libel, too, upon the Whig Club. What will my friend Adam say to this? Gentlemen, I assure you the Whig Club is not a drunken club, nor are its members a noisy rabble. But, does not Mr. Cobbett know that the Duke of Norfolk is not the only man that was struck out of the Privy Council? Does he not know, that the name of that great statesman Mr. Fox was strack out also? And does he not know, that the person who induced his majesty to make that erasure, has since endeavoured to persuade him to strike it in again?—He goes on to say: "If, therefore, any man were to be found who, not at a drunken club, or to a brawling rabble, but in a grave and high assembly, not in the character of an inebriated toast-master, but in that of a sober, constitutional lawyer, had insisted on the *sovereignty of the people* as a first principle of the English law, and had declared, that by law an appeal lay from the decision of the tellers of the Houses of Parliament, to that of the '*tellers of the nation*,' and that if a particular law were disagreeable to the people, however it might have been enacted with all royal and parliamentary solemnity, nevertheless it was not binding, and the people, by the general law, were exempted from obedience to such a particular law, because the people were the supreme and ultimate judges of what was for their own benefit. Lord Kenyon, if he had been chancellor in any kingdom in Europe, would have shrunk from recommending any such man to the favour of a monarch, while there yet remained a shadow of monarchy visible in the world," Here again this lover of the British constitution attacks that constitution in one of its three branches. We know, gentlemen, that every member of Parliament has a right to deliver his free, unbiassed sentiments; and if the plaintiff, in the execution of that right, did exceed the bounds prescribed by the rules of that House, it

would have been a libel on the then Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, who now sits on the bench with his lordship, if he had not called him to order. Why will Mr. Cobbett meddle with matters of so high and important a nature?—Gentlemen, the questions for your consideration are simply these: Is the defendant the proprietor? Did he persist in the publication? Is it a libel upon the plaintiff? And does it affect him in his character and reputation?—Gentlemen, if the libel be true, if the plaintiff be the abandoned miscreant here described, we ought to draw a curtain before him, and hide him from the world for ever. A thousand poniards are unsheathed to revenge the death of Emmett, and this inflammatory libel is calculated to direct them to the heart of the plaintiff. If he goes away from this court with small damages, I shall lament that I brought the business before you. The people of Ireland are deeply interested in the verdict you shall deliver. I love and venerate the people of Ireland. I love those who are loyal. I love those who are not loyal—because I believe they will shortly become so. I trust your verdict will have the effect of doing away all jealousies and prejudices between the two countries, by shewing that an Irish gentleman is not disfranchised by the union, but that, under the mild administration of the laws of England, he is entitled to, and will receive the same measure of justice as in his own country.—Gentlemen, I shall not occupy any more of your attention, but shall conclude, with expressing a hope, that I have said nothing capable of widening the breach between Great Britain and Ireland.

EVIDENCE ON THE PART OF THE PLAINTIFF.

MR. JAMES POLE examined by MR. GARROW.

Q. Did you ever purchase any numbers of Cobbett's Political Register?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Where did you purchase them?

A. In Pall-mall, at a shop described as Cobbett's Political Register Office.

Q. Did you ever buy any other numbers at any other time?

A. Yes, on the 24th of May, at Bagshaw's, in Bow-street, Covent-garden.

Q. Had you any opportunity of knowing whether that work has a rapid sale?

A. Yes; a lady at the shop in Pall-mall told me—

Mr. Adam.—My lord, I object to that question.

Lord Ellenborough.—I do not think the question necessary. It is enough to prove that the work has been in a course of sale.

Mr. Garrow.—Q. Did you find any difficulty in obtaining those numbers?

A. None at all.

MR. CROWE examined by MR. GARROW.

Q. I believe you have got the patent under the great seal appointing Mr. Plunkett Solicitor General of Ireland?

A. I have. [Read by Mr. Lowten.]

Q. I believe you have also a copy of Mr. Plunkett's return for the borough of Carlow.

A. Yes, I have. [Read by Mr. Lowten.]

Q. Have you a copy of the conviction and judgment of Robert Emmett?

A. I have. [Here the copy was produced and read by Mr. Lowten.]

The RIGHT HONOURABLE W. WICKHAM, examined by
MR. GARROW.

Q. Were you in Ireland at the time of the trial of Robert Emmett?

A. I was.

Q. Are you acquainted with Mr. Plunkett the present Solicitor General of Ireland?

A. Yes.

Q. Did he officiate as one of his Majesty's Counsel?

A. Yes. He was one of his Majesty's Counsel.

Q. Was he confidently advised with on all occasions on which the law officers of the crown are generally consulted?

A. Yes. Whenever it was necessary, which frequently occurred—almost daily.

Q. Have you looked at the paper in question, called the libel?

A. I have not.

Q. Cast your eye over the passage, page 808, beginning with "a couple of lawyers without political habits, political information, or honourable connexions." Do you understand those passages to apply to Mr. O'Grady the Attorney General, and Mr. Plunkett the Solicitor General?

A. Clearly of the Attorney and Solicitor General.

Cross-examined by Mr. Adam.

Q. They were the confidential counsel of the executive government at that time?

A. Yes; they certainly were.

Q. Both Mr. O'Grady as well as Mr. Plunkett?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. Both in the confidence of the executive government of Ireland?

A. Yes, both of them.

MR. BARNARD examined by MR. DAMPIER.

Q. Were you in Ireland at the time of Mr. Emmett's trial?

A. I was.

Q. Did you see Mr. Plunkett at that trial?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Was he employed for the prosecution?

A. He was.

Q. Did he make any observations to evidence, in the course of that trial?

A. He did.

Q. Look at this number of Cobbett's Political Register, page 808, and read the passage beginning with the words "If any one man could be found of whom a young but un-

happy victim of the laws."—Whom do you conceive to be meant by "a young but unhappy victim of the laws?"

A. I should suppose Mr. Emmett.

Q. Conceiving Mr. Emmett to be the person alluded to by the words "young and unhappy victim of the laws," whom should you suppose to be intended by the passages, "if any one man could be found," and "that viper whom my father nourished?" &c.

A. I do not know that Mr. Plunkett was nourished by Mr. Emmett's father.

Q. But to whom do you suppose them to apply?

A. To Mr. Plunkett.

Q. Did Mr. Emmett's counsel make no defence?

A. None.

The RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN FOSTER, examined by
MR. NOLAN.

Q. I believe you were Speaker of the Irish House of Parliament previous to the union?

A. I was.

Q. Do you remember Mr. Plunkett sitting as a member in that House?

A. I do.

Q. Do you remember whether Mr. Plunkett ever delivered his opinions on the different subjects agitated in debate?

A. I do not think it proper to state whether or not he delivered his opinions—

Lord Ellenborough.—It only goes to state whether or not he gave any opinions on the subjects in debate.

Q. Do you recollect whether he ever delivered his opinions on the different subjects agitated in debate?

A. He frequently took a part in the debates.

Q. Have you read the libel?

A. I have.

Q. Do you suppose Mr. Plunkett is the person intended in the libel?

Lord Ellenborough.—Mr. Nolan read what particular part you mean.

Mr. Nolan.—Q. Read the passage “if any man could be found,” &c. Taking the whole context of this passage, whom do you conceive to be meant by it?

A. Taking the whole, I should certainly conceive Mr. Plunkett to be meant by it. Taking the last sentence, I should not.

Cross-examined by Mr. Adam,

Q. Mr. Plunkett was a member of the Irish House of Parliament previous to the union?

A. He was.

Q. Did he speak on questions relative to the union between Great Britain and Ireland?

A. Yes, he did.

Q. Do you recollect any of the expressions or arguments he made use of in the course of those debates?

Lord Ellenborough.—It would be a breach of his duty and his oath, to reveal the councils of the nation.

Mr. Adam.—Q. What are your reasons for believing that Mr. Plunkett is not the person meant by the latter part of the passage?

A. I said, that, taking the whole context, I should suppose Mr. Plunkett to be the person meant; but, taking the sentence just read, I should not suppose it was him.

The evidence being closed on the part of the plaintiff, Mr. Lowton read the passages in the Political Register complained of in the declaration; after which,

Mr. Adam rose and addressed the Court as follows:—MY LORD, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY;—The task now devolves on me to occupy a portion of your attention. My learned friend, in his address to you, has made repeated allusions to the proceedings which took place on a former day. He tells you, that he observes the names of the same jury on the pannel, and that he sees the same faces in the box. Gen-

Gentlemen, I am not, indeed, acquainted, like my learned friend, with your persons ; but I know the uprightness of your minds ; I know in general the upright character of an English jury ; I know your powers of distinguishing between a civil action for the purpose of damages, and a criminal prosecution. I know, too, gentlemen, that you are capable of feeling the grand and leading distinction, that in an action for personal damages, the defendant is capable of justifying his conduct. My learned friend has endeavoured to inflame your minds by adverting to the present state of Ireland, and by repeated allusions to the trial on a former day, with which the present action has no connexion whatever. With respect to that trial, you are bound to blot from your memories all recollection of it, to divest yourselves of all prejudices, to try this action with free and unfettered minds, and to consider, as my Lord Kenyon used to say, only what is within the four corners of the record. It is not a libel on my Lord Hardwicke which you have now to try ; it is not a libel upon my Lord Redesdale ; it is not a libel upon Mr. Justice Osborne, or Mr. Secretary Marsden ; but it is, as I before informed you, a civil action for the purpose of damages. My learned friend, with that power of calling up images which he possesses in so eminent a degree, has called up the departed spirits of Mr. Burke and the great Earl of Chatham. He has reminded you of the lines made use of by that noble lord, when speaking of America :

" Be to her virtues ever kind.
Be to her faults a little blind.
And clap the padlock on your mind."

Gentlemen, I beg you will transpose these lines, and apply the two first to the defendant, Mr. Cobbett :

" Be to his virtues ever kind,
Be to his faults a little blind."

and " clap the padlock on your mind," as to the inflammatory effects of those parts of my learned friend's speech,

which have no connexion with the subject before you.—
Gentlemen, in any thing I am about to say, I beg you will
not suppose for one moment, that I am not an enemy to all
professed libellers. I can honestly exclaim with the poet,

"Curs'd be the verse, how smooth soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one virtuous man my foe."

And if I express myself in any way that can be construed
into a justification of what has been written and published, I
entreat that you will not clothe my client with that blame,
and that you will not, from any want of art or ability on my
part, visit him, therefore, with an increase of damages.—
There is another point which I think I have a right to com-
plain of in my learned friend's address to you. He has
spoken very highly of Mr. Cobbett as a public character, and
has made use of the evidence produced on the former trial in
favour of the defendant, in order to enhance the damages
against him. This I am sure you will not suffer to enter
into your consideration.—I hope I shall be able to convince
you, that now, when the settled state of Ireland renders a
repetition of those animadversions on the government, which
have been so long suffered with impunity, unnecessary, it
would be an act of severity, if the defendant, who is the last
person who has fallen into the snare, should be visited with
a vindictive verdict. With respect to the amount of damages,
(for some damages, I admit, you must give,) I earnestly en-
treat you to consider, that Mr. Cobbett is a man virtuous in
private life, that he is the father of a numerous family, and
the husband of an amiable wife, and that he is a person who
maintains himself, not by ribaldry in his writings, for those
writings are uniformly characterized by an honest zeal in
defence of the aristocracy of this country, as well as the
other component parts of its government. He left his
father's house when he was hardly eighteen years of age;
since which time he has been the successful champion, and
almost sole defender of the rights of this country in America.
At the moment I am speaking, he is several years under the

age of forty, and consequently cannot be supposed to have obtained that independence which would not make the heavy damages which my learned friend wishes to wring from you, but which I am sure he will not wring from you, worse than the severest sentence ever inflicted on any person convicted of the grossest libel. If you were to measure them in the proportion my learned friend calls upon you to measure them, you would doom him to an eternal imprisonment; you would doom him to that situation to which it never was meant, and never will be meant by an English jury, that any man should be subjected by the consequences of a civil action.—My learned friend says, that this action was brought, in order to shew the falsehood of the libel. Gentlemen, I have the best authority for saying, that the defendant never entertained the idea of justifying this libel. It was impossible for him to justify it. For, in order to have satisfied your minds, we must have produced that testimony from which we are shut out by the established laws and usages of parliament. The Bill of Rights expressly says, that no words uttered in parliament shall be said any where but in parliament. When, therefore, you are considering that you are called upon to pronounce a verdict of damages, high in their nature, and completely ruinous to Mr. Cobbett, if you should pronounce it, I humbly submit, gentlemen, that you will not throw out of that consideration the situation in which the defendant is thereby placed.—Gentlemen, there were other topics in the speech of my learned friend, of which I have a right to complain, but he knows I am not in the habit of complaining. I will therefore give over my complaints, and come to the other points upon which he has so eloquently descanted. He has called your attention to the Whig Club, to his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, and to another great and illustrious character, Mr. Fox. Most undoubtedly, it is true, that that illustrious character was struck by his majesty's command, out of the list of Privy Council. But, gentlemen, this is not all. My learned friend has stated another circumstance. He has told you at the same time, that the present

Chancellor of the Exchequer, who counselled and advised his majesty so to do, has since advised him to call that illustrious character to the cabinet, and thereby to strike his name in again. If Mr. Fox had thought proper to bring an action against Mr. Cobbett or any other person, I should have said to him, you are not injured by what has been done, but are even thought a proper person to form part of his majesty's government. Gentlemen, *mutato nomine*, the case applies to the plaintiff in the present action. Were you to give one fourth, nay, one twentieth part of the sum at which the plaintiff has thought proper to lay his damages, it would produce the effect upon my client which I have already stated. Gentlemen, this is a grave question. You have already pronounced a verdict which applies to the whole criminality of the case. Mr. Cobbett has been pronounced guilty, not only of the other parts of the publication, but of this very part also. And, if it be unfair to hold up a civil action to criminal punishment, I submit that it would be more especially so in the present case. I, therefore, have every reason to hope, on the part of the character of the defendant, on the part of the wife and children of the defendant, on the part of the fortune of the defendant, that you will be lenient towards him, and that you will not, by excessive damages, doom him to perpetual imprisonment.—My learned friend has treated Mr. Cobbett as the author of this libel, which he represented to you as written with all the nerve and energy which characterize that gentleman's publications. On the other hand, Mr. Attorney-General the other day, gave you to understand, that he had reasons for believing it was not written by Mr. Cobbett. Now, let us examine a little what the nature of this libel is; and, in what I am about to say, I shall state to you a plain unvarnished tale. I acknowledge the innuendoes to have been fully proved, and therefore what I have to discuss relates generally to the libel itself. It says, "from a rare modesty of nature, or from a rare precision of self-knowledge, Lord Kenyon would have acted with reserve and circumspection, on his arrival in a country, with the moral

quality of the inhabitants of which, and with their persons, manners, and individual characters and connexions, he must have been utterly unacquainted. In such a country, torn with domestic sedition and treason, threatened with foreign invasion, and acting, since the union, under an untried constitution;" now let us stop here for a moment and recollect, that in this sentence there is nothing that can be construed into a libel upon the constitution of Ireland, but directly the reverse.

It goes on to say, "if Doctor Addington had required that Lord Kenyon should direct a Cambridgeshire earl 'in all his councils,' Lord Kenyon would as soon, at the desire of Lord St. Vincent, have undertaken to pilot a line of battle ship through the Needles." And then it comes to that part which is the ground work of the present action: "that viper! whom my father nourished! he it was from whose lips I first imbibed those principles and doctrines, which now by their effects drag me to my grave." Now, gentlemen, I entreat you to notice and consider the connexion which this passage has with the other parts of the libel, and, having done so, I am persuaded you will be of opinion with me, that it must have been used in a figurative manner.

It then states, "Of Lord Kenyon, therefore, (Cambrius must well know) it never could have been believed, that he himself would lead such a character forward, introduce him to the favour of a deceived sovereign, clothe him in the robes and load him with the emoluments of office. Lord Kenyon must have known, that a noble duke, for having toasted at a drunken club, in a common tavern, to a noisy rabble, 'the sovereignty of the people,' was struck by his majesty's command out of the Privy Council, and deprived of all his offices both civil and military. If, therefore, any man were to be found who, not at a drunken club, or to a brawling rabble, but in a grave and high assembly, not in the character of an inebriated toast-master, but in that of a sober constitutional lawyer, had insisted on the sovereignty of the people, as a first principle of the English law, and had declared, that

by law an appeal lay from the decision of the tellers of the Houses of Parliament, to that of the 'tellers of the nation;' and that if a particular law were disagreeable to the people, however it might have been enacted with all royal and parliamentary solemnity, nevertheless it was not binding, and the people, by the general law, were exempted from obedience to such a particular law, because the people were the supreme and ultimate judges of what was for their own benefit; Lord Kenyon, if he had been Chancellor in any kingdom of Europe, would have shrunk from recommending any such man to the favour of a monarch, while there yet remained a shadow of monarchy visible in the world." Now, gentlemen, this part of the question relates to a circumstance, the particulars of which, we have been prevented, by the established law of Parliament, from diving into; nor do I wish to bring it forward in this place; but I have a right to state, that if any person should have printed, so far back as the year 1799, a speech importing to be a speech made by the plaintiff, Mr. Plunkett, and if it should appear that the passage I have just read to you, is an exact copy of a passage in that speech, I submit, that this is a case extremely favourable to my client. My learned friend in the course of his speech, has alluded to me. Let me also in my turn beg leave to allude to him. Suppose in a lecture room he had insisted on the sovereignty of the people as a first principle of the English law, and had declared, that by law an appeal lay from the decision of the tellers of the Houses of Parliament, to that of the tellers of the nation; what species of moral offence would it have been to have said, that he was an improper person to become the law officer of the crown? Where would have been the moral crime in publishing that my learned friend had made use of those expressions? And more; if it could be proved, that those expressions had been published and attributed to him in newspapers and in pamphlets, from the year 1800 up to the present year 1804, and that he had never called upon any of those publishers for an explanation, what sort of damages, I ask, would you have given to my learned friend? Having

said this, let me read to you the infamous libel attributed to Mr. Plunkett. It is stated in this book, purporting to be a collection of speeches on the Union, that, in the Irish House of Commons, on the 22nd of June 1799, Mr. Plunkett made use of these words, "I, in the most express terms deny the competency of Parliament to do this Act," (meaning the Act of Legislative Union between the two countries.) "I tell you that if, circumstanced as you are, you pass this Act, it will be a mere nullity, and that no man in Ireland will be bound to obey it. I make the assertion deliberately, I repeat it, and call on any man who hears me, to take down my words—"

MR. ERSKINE.—I submit to your lordship, that this sort of evidence is perfectly inadmissible.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH.—Altogether so, and when I come to address the Jury, I shall certainly take occasion to remind them, that they must discharge it totally from their recollection.

MR. ADAM.—I feel a considerable degree of embarrassment at this interruption. I did not interrupt my learned friend when he was impressing your minds with the idea that Mr. Cobbett was the author of this libel.—Gentlemen, the point on which I was addressing you was this, that if such words have been attributed to Mr. Plunkett, I was submitting to you, that after five years of silent acquiescence on the part of Mr. Plunkett, after suffering the expressions here attributed to him, to be sent to every corner of the kingdom in the form of newspapers and of pamphlets, it would be an extremely hard case to inflict severe damages upon Mr. Cobbett for the mere republication of them.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH.—I have no objection to your stating this as matter of supposition, but, in the shape of evidence, it cannot possibly be admitted.

MR. ADAM.—My lord, I was just about to state, that I did not mean to proceed further into the detail of this subject. Gentlemen, I wish you to consider in what state this cause stands, and what the circumstances are, which entitle my

learned friend to demand such excessive damages. I have stated to you the situation of Mr. Cobbett and that of his family, and I trust I have done it with decorum. With regard to the plaintiff, Mr. Plunkett, you have it in evidence, that he was his majesty's Solicitor General in Ireland at the time of the publication, and you also have it in evidence, that he is still in the confidence of the Irish government; but you have no evidence, that any step whatever has been taken to remove him from the situation which he enjoys. Has he received any injury by the publication? Is he not still his majesty's Solicitor General? Is he not still in the high career to honours and emoluments? I ask then, as my learned friend has not produced one single circumstance to prove to you that Mr. Plunkett has been injured by the publication in question, —I ask, I say, whether, under all these circumstances, this is a case which calls for those excessive damages, which my learned friend has entreated you to give? Gentlemen, you have already passed a verdict of guilty upon the information for public criminality. You are now considering an action for private damages. Mr. Plunkett has received redress as to the former, and if you should find, as I suppose you will find, the defendant guilty, (as no justification whatever has been attempted,) he will have a further opportunity of shewing to the world, that Mr. Cobbett never attempted to justify the truth of it, that he did not wait to consult counsel, but took his immediate determination to enter no justification upon the record. Gentlemen, I submit that, under these circumstances, you must quit the box before you pronounce a verdict of damages. Let those damages be ever so low, that verdict will be sufficient to establish, that Mr. Plunkett has completely vindicated his character, and will shew to the world, that what was alleged against him was untrue. Gentlemen, I am persuaded that the plaintiff does not come here to take out of the pocket of Mr. Cobbett a sum, which would not enrich him, but make Mr. Cobbett poor indeed. Gentlemen, I shall not trouble you with any further observations, but shall conclude with expressing my firm reliance, that you

will not inflict a punishment beyond what the justice of the case requires.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH.—Gentlemen; this is an action for reparation in damages for a civil injury done to Mr. Plunkett, the Solicitor General of Ireland, by the publication of a libel, with the contents of which you have been made fully acquainted. The defendant's counsel has admitted, that the preliminary proof has been adduced, and no justification appears on the record. The only question, therefore, for your consideration is, the quality of the libel, and the measure of damages you will give in the exercise of your sound discretion. You will lay out of your consideration the antecedent matter of the criminal trial, on which the defendant has been convicted. This is an action for the injury done to the fair fame of an individual, and to ascertain the damages to which he is entitled. That which gave the public a title to reparation, ought not, however, to operate to the abridgement of the right of a particular individual who complains of a private injury. It will be for you to consider carefully the circumstances of the case and the malignity of the libel, and to say, what reparation in damages the plaintiff ought to receive. These damages are not to be reduced by the poverty of the defendant, if he is poor, nor increased by his wealth, if he is rich; but are to be admeasured by the size and magnitude of the injury done to the plaintiff. The only way of measuring the extent of the injury done to a man's fame is, by asking yourselves, what would make my mind and my feelings an adequate compensation if such a libel as this were true? That it is not true, is admitted. If it were true, it would have been open to the defendant to have justified it on the record. If a man thinks proper to assert that which it is difficult to prove, or represent that which cannot be revealed, they are difficulties of his own creating, and the libel must go forth accredited or discredited, according to the circumstances. But, gentlemen, as to the first part of the libel, I take the principal *gravamen* of the injury to lie in that passage which commences with the words, "that viper whom

my father nourished!" To this passage I am desirous of drawing your particular attention; and, really, it seems hardly possible to depict a person in more odious colours than are here employed. I would ask, what could give more pain to a virtuous mind, than to insinuate that he had acted like our common enemy, "the seducer 'ere the accuser of mankind;" that he had first seduced and afterwards destroyed, whom he had first corrupted; that he had instilled into the mind of Mr. Emmett, the son of his friend, principles of disloyalty and rebellion, and had afterwards, not in the ordinary exercise of his duty, but "with a speech to evidence" wantonly lashed the man to whom he was under family obligations, and who was the pupil of his own sedition? It appears to me hardly possible to depict any one under more odious colours. It matters not whether the defendant be the author or only the publisher and adopter of another man's malignity. If he chooses to send it into the world, he is criminal and guilty, and is liable to all the consequences. Leaving the other parts of the libel out of the question, I shall shortly call your attention to that part which relates to the plaintiff. It says, "if any one man could be found, of whom a young but unhappy victim of the justly offended laws of his country had, in the moment of his conviction and sentence, uttered the following apostrophe — "That viper! whom my father nourished!" Is it possible to state any thing more detestable, than that a person, who had been nourished by the father of a man who had rendered himself amenable to the infliction of the law, should insult and sting his son to death? "He it was from whose lips I first imbibed those principles and doctrines, which now by their effects drag me to my grave; and he it is who is now brought forward as my prosecutor, and who, by an unheard of exercise of the prerogative, has wantonly lashed with a speech to evidence the dying son of his former friend, when that dying son had produced no evidence, had made no defence; but, on the contrary, had acknowledged the charge, and had submitted to his fate.—Lord Kenyon would have turned with horror

from such a scene, in which, although guilt was in one part to be punished, yet, in the whole drama, justice was confounded, humanity outraged, and loyalty insulted." Gentlemen, this is the part which particularly presses on my mind. As to the language which the plaintiff may be supposed to have held in the Irish House of Parliament, it might, if true, render him unfit for recommendation to his majesty—it might be improper. This, however, the defendant has not attempted to justify. But it is the other part of the libel, containing the most bitter and acrimonious observations that can possibly be made use of, to which I wish to confine your attention. Consider what situation Mr. Plunkett is in. He holds an office at all times and in all countries of an invidious nature; that of a public prosecutor, whose denunciations may probably terminate in the death of the criminal. The libel states, "that such a scene was acted as Lord Kenyon would have turned away from with horror; a scene, in which, although guilt was in one part to be punished, yet, in the whole drama, justice was confounded, humanity outraged, and loyalty insulted." To say of a public officer of the crown, that he has acted in such a scene, is to imply that he is forgetful of every principle of justice, and is placing him in the lowest possible state of degradation. These, gentlemen, are the circumstances of this case. It is for you to say, without considering the capacity of the defendant as to his wealth or poverty, what reparation the plaintiff is entitled to receive from the justice of his country. Whatever you may determine upon, I have no doubt they will be such as ought to satisfy the party aggrieved; and, with these few observations, I leave the decision in the hands of those to whom, by the constitution, it is solely referred.

The Jury retired for about twenty minutes, and returned with a verdict for the Plaintiff—Damages £500

CHAPTER II.

COBBETT was now an inmate of Newgate, smarting in person and in purse, for his vigorous support of the blessed constitution of England, and he had ample time to ponder on the reward which he had received, and to devise those means, by which he could assail his enemies in their strong holds. Many of his old friends deserted him, but on a sudden, he acquired new ones, by altering the tone of the sentiments which he had been accustomed to use. Amongst those new friends was Sir Francis Burdett, whom he had generally treated with an unbecoming severity, but who now suddenly became the object of his warmest panegyric. Sir Francis often visited him in Newgate, where the party frequently consisted of four of the most notorious characters of the times, Sir Francis Burdett, Major Cartwright, Henry Hunt, and William Cobbett. It was in this conclave that the affairs of the nation were canvassed with a degree of perseverance and acuteness superior to any thing which had ever taken place before, and which may be said to have laid the foundation of many of those great political events which were afterwards recorded in the annals of the country.

The question was often discussed, not only of the legality, but also of the positive necessity of canvassing the actions of public men, and thence the inference was drawn, that the incarceration of Cobbett for so long a period as two years, to which was attached the ruinous fine of £1000, with £500 added to it, for one and the same libel, only brought before the jury of the country under a different shape, was a direct act of oppression. It was fully determined upon, that freely to make observations on, openly and undisguisedly to approve of or to censure the conduct of men in place and power, is the

undoubted right of every subject of this realm, and in every one who, through the means of the press, undertakes to communicate political information to the public, is not only a right but a duty. In speaking of the liberty of the press, we should always remember that which is but too often forgotten, to discriminate carefully as to the objects and the occasions, to which the due exercise of this liberty applies, because from an indiscriminate application, either of the words or of the thing, doubts frequently arise, and, indeed, it becomes a disputable point, whether the thing, of which we boast so much, be a good or an evil, and of course whether it ought to be encouraged or suppressed. The inutility, and the public as well as individual injury in many cases of exposing, through the means of the press, the faults of persons in private life; is so obvious, that though no more than the truth be so exposed, the act, from whatever motive proceeding, seldom fails in this feeling and sensitive age to meet with general disapprobation. Perceiving this propensity of the mind, all those who wish to prevent a freedom of language with regard to public men, let them take care first to confound public with private character and faults; next, to give the appellation of slander to all censure *indiscriminately*, and then to break forth into a high-wrought description of the odiousness and wickedness of slander.

Whether the art of printing has proved to mankind in general, and to this nation in particular, a fortunate or an *unfortunate* discovery, whether that mode of applying this art, which is here denominated the liberty of the press, ought or ought not to have been tolerated, these are questions which we shall not here stop to discuss. The art has been discovered; the liberty of the press exists, and in exercising this liberty, we should not regard it as an indulgence, as something that is winked at, and with respect to our own duty, as a right which we may either exercise or not, as our interest or our caprice may happen to dictate. It should be recollected that our laws, our public regulations and institutions are framed with the knowledge of the existence of a certain influence of the press. All legislators leave some-

thing to be effected through the influence of religion, morality, and public opinion, and ours in particular fail not to make besides, an allowance for the liberty of the press. The liberty of the press, therefore, really forms a part of the present constitution of our government, and when exercised with respect to the public character or conduct of public men, there seems to be no sound reason for our circumscribing it within any other boundary than that of TRUTH, especially when it be remembered that these public men have it at all times in their power to cause the press to be used in their behalf, and when it is well known that they do cause it to be so used, and that too at the expense of the public. A sophistical mode of statement has been employed in order to screen public men from the animadversions of the press. We have been told that their character is *public property*, that it ought, therefore, to be watched over by the law. True, in the plain sense of the words, but by this careful watching is meant a power in the law to punish men for writing *truth*, if in censure of public men. Here then lies the deception: the character of public men is public property, but it is their *true* character, and no man should, therefore, be liable to punishment for writing the truth of public men. The character of the Duke of Cumberland as a public man may be said to be public property, although it is a property which the public have no great reason to boast the possession of. The historian of the life of this man, must, if he confines himself to the relation of simply what is *true*, find himself in a very awkward predicament, for the public being bound to protect their property, however bad and rotten that property may be, and the character of the Duke of Cumberland forming a part of that property, the historian must either banish from his pages whatever is *true*, or he must fall a victim to the vengeance of the public in the defence of their property, such defence to be paid for out of the very purse to which the historian is himself contributing. According, however, to the law, the historian would not be allowed to prove that what he has asserted is *true*, and probably he would

lose his liberty, if not his ease, in endeavouring to open the eyes of his countrymen. While, however, this doctrine restrains the press within very narrow bounds, as to the follies and the crimes of men in power, it makes ample amends on the side of their wisdom and their virtue, both of which, in the highest possible degree, we are freely permitted to attribute to them, though they are well known to be fools or knaves, or, if we may be allowed to use a parliamentary phrase, in reference to the Duke of Cumberland, or *something more*. Should we, however, be obliged in our editorial capacity to confine ourselves to an eulogium of the extraordinary *wisdom* and *virtue* of his royal highness, our pages would resemble the celebrated one in Tristram Shandy, on which not a single letter is impressed, and, therefore, the reader is left to form his own conclusions, as to what ought to be inserted, or for his own satisfaction and amusement, he might fill it up himself.

Seeing, however, that the character of public men is public property, without allowing the public at the same time to do *what* they like with their own property, and seeing also, that the law considers, or is made to consider the public as a party deeply interested in such cases, it would, we opine, be very hard to show that false praise is not as likely to be injurious to the public, as false censure of public men. *Truth* is, in such cases, the boundary marked out by reason, by justice, and by the spirit of the laws and constitution of the kingdom, and while we confine ourselves within that boundary, we must set at defiance the outcry of those, who, for reasons, which are obvious enough, stigmatize as a libeller every man that ventures to satirize the conduct of a Guelph, or a minister of state. "There is not," says Pope, "a greater error in the world than that, which fools are so apt to fall into, and knaves with good reason to encourage, the mistaking of a *satirist* for a *libeller*, whereas, to a true satirist nothing is so odious as a libeller, for the same reason as to a man truly virtuous, nothing is so hateful as a hypocrite."

With respect to the character and conduct of persons in

private life, this doctrine may, as was before observed, be too full of terrors to the childish follies, and low beggarly vices of the present day; but if it be not admitted with respect to the public character and conduct of men in place and power, if they can and do at all times command four fifths of the press; if their partizans be permitted constantly to ply the public with praises of every part of their character and conduct, if even their vices and their crimes be thus made the subject of eulogium; if all this be so, and if, nevertheless, a man be liable to punishment for uttering the *truth* in censure of men in place and power, then is the liberty of the press, considered as a check upon such men, a mere mockery; while on the other hand, it is to them a most convenient instrument in deluding the people into an approbation of, or at least a great submission to measures, against which, were they left to judge from their own observation and feelings, their minds could not fail to revolt.

A gradual and important change now took place in the political disquisitions of Cobbett; and foreseeing that he would be attacked for his apparent inconsistency, in so openly and courageously defending the conduct of Mr. Pitt, and then suddenly veering against him, he sent forth the following exposition of his reasons, although it may be distinctly seen, that there was working in his breast at the time, a deep corroding spirit of revenge, for the prosecutions which had been brought against him, and which, in a pecuniary point of view, went far to reduce him to poverty. He commences the extenuation of his conduct, in the following manner :—

“In calling for public censure on Mr. Pitt, I am fully aware of the still considerable prejudice that is to be encountered. We are all of us very much the creatures of habit. It has long been the habit of many good men to approve, without much examination, of every thing said and done by Mr. Pitt, and to give him their support accordingly. Attachments of this sort are not so easily shaken as some of those of a more private nature, for besides that we are less

vigilant in public than in private concerns, besides that the indulgence of false pride in adhering to our errors, costs us less in the former than in the latter case; we are prone, from a weakness of almost universal prevalence, to prefer being thought ignorant of our own business, than ignorant of the business of the state; and you shall hardly find a man amongst your acquaintance, who will not, without the least reluctance or reserve, acknowledge himself to have been the dupe of a crafty servant, or professed friend, and yet who will not resort to every species of disguise, rather than confess that he has been deceived in the character of a political leader. This propensity, when not carried beyond the limits of reason and of honour, when confined to the excusing of venal political sins, is to be applauded, because without a readiness to make such allowances, there can be nothing worthy of the name of attachment. But when it is pushed to extremes, when the resolution to adhere is so strong, as to set at nought the dictates of truth and of justice, then the adherent becomes a mere partizan, and we are upon no principle of charity forbidden to consider him as an ignorant, an obstinate, or an interested person. Lightly to change our opinion of those, whom we have long greatly admired and extolled, is a mark of that weakness and fickleness, which are but too frequently accompanied with a want of integrity, but, on the other hand, to persevere in expressing an opinion, which has been proved to us to be ill founded, and which, therefore, we do not entertain, is, especially when the interests of our country are concerned, an act of insincerity highly criminal, and characteristic of a mind destitute of every just and generous principle."

In the delineation of a political character, in the exposure of the tricks and artifices, the crimes and delinquencies of men in power, no man can venture to compete with Cobbett. His history of the conduct of Pitt, from his quitting office in February 1801 to April 1804, and his return to office in May 1804, and then after the Tenth Report of the Naval Commissioners, which implicated Lord Melville in the peculation

of the peoples' money, may be considered as one of the most energetical specimens of historical writing, which this country can produce. To insert the whole of it, would far exceed the limits to which we are necessitated to adhere, we shall, therefore, briefly confine ourselves to those parts, which throw an important light upon the political intrigues of those times, and which show the difference of the principles which influenced the conduct of Mr. Pitt, at the outset of his political career, and those which he professed when he appeared as the prime minister of this country.

It may be hardly necessary to remind our readers, that at the time when Mr. Pitt resigned in 1801, we were engaged in war, and that the epoch, though not the most, was certainly, not the least alarming of that war. The ground of his resignation, as it was afterwards clearly proved by himself in the House of Commons, was this, as expressed in his own words, on the 16th February 1801. "It was upon the turn which the Catholic Question took, the success of which I conceive to be essentially necessary to the strength, prosperity, and unanimity of the United Kingdom, that I felt myself bound in *conscience* and in *honour* to give in my resignation. The *early* discussion and decision of that question were incumbent upon those, who under the circumstances of the Union, considered it as a measure of the utmost importance to the strength and tranquillity of the empire. So strong is my conviction of the propriety and necessity of the measure, that *I could not continue to remain a member of that government, which deemed it inexpedient to entertain it.*" This was the open declaration of his motive for resigning, but if we follow him to his conduct at the time of making the peace with France, what an apostacy of principle presents itself. To say that George III. was competent to choose a man to rule the destinies of his kingdom, at a time of the most alarming events, as connected with the integrity of the empire, is investing him with a power of discernment and discrimination, which he evinced but a very small portion of, in the other transactions of his life. It was acciden-

tally ascertained, that on the resignation of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Addington was the man of the king's own choice, who was to compete in talent, energy, and diplomatic intrigue with such a man as Napoleon, and the great and talented men by whom he was surrounded.

The father of this Mr. Addington, now the pensioned Lord Sidmouth, was family doctor to Mr. Pitt's father, who brought up his son to the bar, where, like many others who crowd the benches of our courts of law, he seldom saw a brief, though perhaps, by some lucky freak of fortune, a half guinea motion now and then fell to his lot. From this comparative obscurity he was raised to the chair of the House of Commons, and by the most judicious choice of his sovereign, was called from that important post, to appear on the floor of the house, as the champion and defender of the rights and privileges of the country. Perhaps, however, from a consciousness of his imbecility, he would not consent to become minister, till he had consulted with, and obtained the approbation, and a positive promise of support from Mr. Pitt; nay, Mr. Pitt, although his *conscience* and his *honour* had told him to resign, consented to remain in office upon certain conditions, *after* Mr. Addington had been so fortunately honoured with the choice and approbation of his sovereign. Mr. Pitt's offer was not accepted, but nevertheless he had the choosing of the persons, who were to come into the ministry of his own choosing, and obviously intended by him as the mere delegates of his power in the government. When the peace came before the public, Mr. Pitt, whom the ministry had consulted in every stage of the negotiations, and who retained, in fact, as much authority, as if he had still been minister, supported it in Parliament. He not only supported it with his vote upon every important question arising out of it, but he by words defended it, and gave to all and every part of it his most unqualified approbation; declaring that the ministers who made it, were entitled to the hearty thanks and the lasting gratitude of their country. Here the people, had not their senses been drowned in the delirious and fleet-

ing joy of the day, would have recalled to their minds, the solemn resolutions, which he had so often expressed, the solemn promises, which he had so often made them during the war, and the whole of which he had now broken and falsified. He had solemnly declared, not much more than two years before, that war might be carried on for any length of time, without the creation of new debt. That it would not be difficult to provide taxes for eight years; that he never would be satisfied with false security; and that he never would consent to any peace, but such a one as should at once restore to Europe her settled and balanced constitution of general polity, and to every negotiating power in particular, that weight in the scale of general empire, which had ever been found the best guarantee and pledge of local independence and general security. Yet in direct contradiction to those very sentiments, did he help to negotiate, and finally express his approbation of a peace, in which all these objects were abandoned. The kingdom of Sardinia he left a conquest to France; of Italy, Buonaparte took possession in the quality of President, at the very moment that the treaty was negotiating; Portugal ceded part of her foreign dominions to France; Switzerland was left under the control of a French army; Naples in a situation very little better; and Holland in a state of dependence, as complete as if it were a province of France; and as to this kingdom, what degree of *security* he obtained for it, the reader, be his rank in life what it may, hardly needs to be asked. No security have we since felt, not one moment of tranquillity have we since that day experienced. In that peace he tacitly surrendered the honour of the flag, because in former treaties it was stipulated for, and in that of Amiens it was not; therefore the omission amounted to a positive surrender; the surrender of an honour claimed by England from her earliest days; demanded by her, and yielded to her, in the reigns of even her most pusillanimous princes, retained through every vicissitude of her fortune, every change in her dynasties, and every revolution in her government, sometimes indeed neglected, and sometimes im-

paired, but at all times in existence ; at all times the boast of Englishmen, and never completely abandoned and effaced from the heraldry of nations, till the administration of William Pitt. Let this be recorded upon the pedestal of his STATUE ; and on the reverse of it, let it be engraved by the hand of some indignant Englishman, "THIS WAS THE MAN, THROUGH WHOSE COUNSELS, WAS SURRENDERED THE DEAREST BIRTHRIGHT OF ENGLISHMEN, THE LIVES AND THE TITLE WON BY THEIR FOREFATHERS IN THE FIELDS OF FRANCE, AND HANDED DOWN UNTARNISHED, TILL THE DAYS OF HIS ALL-DEGRADING ADMINISTRATION."

The following, Cobbett calls the coquetry of Pitt, and certainly his conduct not only partakes strongly of that quality, but it must impress the reader with rather a degrading opinion of the character of the heaven-born minister, who could stoop to such petty artifices, in order to bring himself back again into power.

"The nation," says Cobbett, "began to perceive that government could go on without Mr. Pitt; the people seemed very willing to indulge him in his love of retirement, and indeed he was on the point of sinking out of sight for ever. To prevent this, tricks, that would have disgraced mountebanks or hireling harlots, were played off by his partizans, who, in order to keep his name alive, contrived, and in conjunction with certain jews and contractors, grown rich under him, actually set on foot, the scheme of erecting a STATUE in honour of him, in honour of a man, under whose sway the nation had been more burdened and disgraced than ever nation before was in the world. Finding that this scheme did not succeed to their wishes ; perceiving that the name of Pitt was pronounced every day less and less frequently, they had recourse to other contrivances. The public writers, who yet lived in hope of his return to power, endeavoured by all the means they could devise, to awaken the remembrance of the public. Mr. Pitt was, they told us, resolved to devote the remainder of his life to agricultural pursuits,

would to God, the report had been true, for after having *harrowed* the feelings of the people of this country almost past endurance, it would have been a little pastime for him to have spent the remainder of his life in *harrowing* the ground. His partizans shed their tears most copiously at the prospect of never seeing him in Parliament again. His close adherent, Mr. Canning, told the House of Commons that his right honourable friend was labouring to detach the people of England from him (Mr. Pitt,) and he had the mortification to observe, that the house seemed to say: 'God send your right honourable friend success.'

"Next we were told in the Pitt newspapers, that Mr. Pitt proposed to go abroad, and travel over the continent of Europe. All would not do; the nation appeared quite indifferent as to what became of him—for instead of shedding tears at his proposed departure from the country, a hope was expressed that the languishing and voluptuous beauties of Italy, might be able to penetrate a heart, which had hitherto proved impervious to the fascinations of the English beauties. The last shift was tried, and we were assured that he was dangerously sick, and in order to bolster up that report, he actually went to Bath for his recovery, though it was afterwards found that, at that very moment, he was willing to return to office, and of course, to take upon him those duties, which it is impossible for a person in ill health to perform. Still the nation was insensible, and when his name was mentioned, instead of expressing an anxious fear that so great a blessing to the nation should be prematurely carried off by death, the general exclamation was: "Let him go to Bath." Neither the threatened absence, nor the death of Mr. Pitt appeared to produce any effect whatever upon the public mind. All the inventions of meanness, of beggarly ambition were exhausted, and to no purpose, and to the new war it was, that he was solely indebted for a temporary resuscitation."

On the 18th February appeared the celebrated Tenth Report of the Naval Commissioners, "And now," says Cob-

bett, "there was some fine work cut out for the heaven-born minister." The charge against Lord Melville was so simple, the delinquency was so flagrant, the proof against him so satisfactory, that it was by many persons firmly believed that Mr. Pitt would not attempt to screen him. The people had not forgotten his speech, in the true spirit of virtuous indignation on the subject of abuses in the expenditure of the public money; political impressions are well known to be most powerful, and, therefore, it was not to be wondered at, that those, whose attachment to Mr. Pitt was founded in his conduct at the outset of his political career, should, especially if they had not been very attentive observers of his progress, have continued that attachment to the very eve of Lord Melville's disgrace.

"Never, however, did a man sink so low in the estimation of the public as William Pitt; when, in his place in the House of Commons, he boldly and unblushingly declared, that the public had not suffered any *actual loss* by the conduct of Melville and Trotter, although it had been distinctly proved, that owing to their malversations, the country had sustained a loss of many millions. Yet, because Lord Melville was not what is called a defaulter, because he, at going out of office, paid over to his successor the *mere balance* that he had in his hands, because this was the case, Mr. Pitt contended, that there had arisen, from the misapplication of the public money, no actual loss to the public. The fallacy of this position is so glaring, that little needs be said in answer to it, for the reader has only to consider himself having large concerns, the disbursements of which are managed by a steward, who, instead of calling upon his master for money no sooner than it is wanted, takes care to call for a sum always before hand, and constantly to keep out at interest, for his own emolument, a sum that would otherwise be kept out at interest for the emolument of his master."

It was at first apprehended by Cobbett, that the steady opposition, which he evinced to the ministry of Mr. Pitt, would prove of serious disadvantage to him in the sale of his

Register, but this, fortunately for him, did not turn out to be the case. It was also natural to be supposed, that many very worthy and sensible men would recollect the professions with which he commenced his career in England, and then think that they had perceived a departure of principle, and a gross recantation of those opinions, which his writings so particularly exhibited; and although no such departure, even in the slightest degree, was proved, yet it might reasonably have been feared, that the deep-rooted prejudices of good men, long attached to the name of Pitt, from the purest of motives, and moreover strongly averse from making an acknowledgment, involving an accusation of their own discernment, would have alienated a number of his subscribers, particularly when it was considered, that his Register stood at first almost exclusively upon the support of persons of that very description. So far, however, from these fears being realised, Mr. Cobbett received from persons, formerly strongly attached to Mr. Pitt, not less perhaps, than a hundred and fifty written assurances, that the reasons, on which he had founded his conviction of the destructive tendency of that minister's administration, had produced a conviction equally strong on their minds; whilst on the other hand, he received only seven letters, expressing a dissent from his opinions, two of which letters he published. Nevertheless, there were not wanting many, amongst the well known and undisguised hirelings of the day, who believed, and wished others to believe also, that Cobbett was "a self-interested scribbler." "A scribbler," retorted Cobbett, "I may be, but to believe that I am a self-interested one, not only must the believer know nothing of my character, but he must be totally blind to the tendency of my conduct, for if self-interest were my object, who is there that can fail to perceive, that as to any thing beyond the effects of mere industry, I long have been, and yet am pursuing exactly the wrong course."

Mr. Cobbett having to his own satisfaction, and that of all the nation, whose eyes were not hoodwinked, or who had not been blinded by the golden dust of the treasury, demon-

strated the ruinous tendency of the administration of Mr. Pitt, proceeds to launch the bolts of his thunder at the reckless manner in which that heaven-born minister lavished the public money, in the grant of pensions to individuals, who had no claim whatever upon the country by the commission of a single great or patriotic action. The subject at this time is one of paramount interest, as it is attempted, at the present day, to be shown, that the enormous burden of the Pension List has been brought upon this country by the whigs. It would be an idle task, to look for any consistency between the actions of public men and their professions; but, perhaps, in the whole history of this country, it will be impossible to adduce a stronger proof of the folly of attaching any belief or importance to the opinions of public men, as expressed in the senate of the nation, and which are to be taken as the touchstone of their private or political conduct. For the purpose of exemplifying this matter in its fullest force, we will quote the words of Mr. Pitt, as given in a speech, when the proposition was made for reducing the expenses of the Civil List:—

“The proposition would have come,” said Mr. Pitt, “with more grace; it would have come with more benefit to the public service, if it had sprung from the royal breast. His majesty’s ministers ought to have come forward, and proposed a reduction in the Civil List, to give to the people the consolation of knowing, that *their sovereign participated in the sufferings of the empire, and presented an honourable example of retrenchment in an hour of general difficulty*. And surely it is no reason, that because ministers fail to do their duty, the house should fail to do theirs. Acting as the faithful representatives of the people, who have trusted them, they ought to seize upon every object of equitable resource that presents itself, and *certainly none are so fair, so probable, or so pleasing as retrenchment and economy*. The obligations of their character demand from them not to hesitate in pursuing those objects, even to the foot of the throne. Such conduct would become them, as the councillors of his

majesty, and as the representatives of the people, *for it is their immediate duty as the Commons House of Parliament, to guard the liberties, the lives, and the properties of the people.* The last obligation is the strongest, it is more immediately incumbent upon them, to guard the properties, because they are more liable to invasion *by the secret and subtle attacks of influence*, than either their lives or their liberties. The tutelage of this house may be a harsh term, but it cannot be disgraceful to a constitutional king. *The abridgment of unnecessary expense can be no abatement of royalty. Magnificence and grandeur are not inconsistent with retrenchment and economy, but on the contrary, in a time of necessity and common exertion, solid grandeur is dependent on the reduction of expense."*

Such were the patriotic sentiments delivered by William Pitt in 1781, we will now contrast his conduct with them for about ten months, that is from 1st May 1804, to the 1st April 1805. It must be admitted that actions ought always to be estimated with due reference to the professions, or the general ascribed motives, or character of the person from whom they proceed. A lavish expenditure of the public money, and especially when evidently made for purposes of private ambition, or any other purposes disconnected from, if not opposed to the good of the nation, must in any minister call for the censure of all loyal and public-spirited men, in whatever rank of life they may be placed; when, therefore, we see such an expenditure falling from the hands of one, who rose into public favour by professions, such as those as given in the speech of Pitt, who acquired his power over the public purse, by the most solemn promises to guard it with fidelity and vigilance, when in such a person we meet with a waste of the public treasure, surpassing all former example, it is certainly just that our indignation should be greater against him, than against a person from whom we have never heard any professions of purity.

It would far exceed our limits, to enter into a full exposition, as given by Cobbett, of the grants of pensions given by

Pitt, to obscure individuals, in the course of ten months, amounting in the whole to £38,000 a year; and yet the conservatives of the present day have the effrontery to tell us, that the enormity of the Pension List is to be attributed solely to the wanton and lavish extravagance of the whigs. The opinions of Cobbett on this subject, are of sterling value, as many of them are applicable to the present list of pensioners, who may be classed as the state paupers of the nation, but who, like other out-door paupers, ought to be made to contribute to their living, by some kind of active labour. The funds from which some of the pensions are paid, furnished Cobbett with many good subjects for his sarcastic talent. Thus it appears that the pensions of Sir W. D'Arley, Lady Thompson, T. Fitzgerald, Lucy Marsh, Benjamin Tucker, Sir J. E. Courtenay, and Mr. Stew. Courtenay, were said to be payable out of *old stores*. "Old hemp and worn-out sail cloth," exclaims Cobbett, "good for nothing at all! Quite a clear gain to the country to pay pensions from such a source. That Lady Thompson should live upon old *junk*! and Lucy Marsh! I wonder who in all the world is Lucy Marsh! It really is fitting that we should know something of the pedigree of these fair ones, towards the decorating of whose persons, we have the honour so largely to contribute.* There will at any rate be something grateful in the task I am performing, for it will introduce to the knowledge and notice of the whole nation, many persons never before

* We perfectly agree with Mr. Cobbett, that the public should know something of the pedigree of the swarm of Lucys and Charlottes, of Susans, and Margarets, who figure to a good round amount in our pension list; the accomplishment of such a task would, however, be one of extreme delicacy, for we will venture to say, that there are many, who could not tell who was their father, although they might know something about their mother. The Fitz-Jordans would here have the advantage, for they know something about both father and mother; and if report be true, the former frequently knows more about his offspring than is agreeable to him; of their mother, however, it may be said, that they pretended to know nothing, at a time, when all the world knew that she could scarcely find a grave to hold her mouldering form.

heard of, except within the walls of their own houses and those of the treasury."

We recommend the following to Mr. Hume, as it may give him a clue to the unravelment of some of the sources from which the pensions are paid :

" A certain number of pensions," says Mr. Cobbett, " are paid out of the duties of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands. And here we may stop for a moment, to observe on the perplexity, the apparently studied perplexity of all those lists and accounts, as laid before Parliament. Why not pay *all the pensions* out of one fund, and let them come under one single head, in chronological or alphabetical order? Why not divide them, the males and the females? Why not give them some division more rational, than that of referring merely to the sources whence is drawn the money to pay them? which appears not to be less difficult, than it would be for a merchant to class his payments under heads appropriated to the different sorts of currency in which he should make such payments. But this perplexity is neither without its object nor its use. *It bewilders those who examine, or rather, look at the accounts.* They do not easily come to a clear understanding of what they see; and there are very few, who will bestow much time and pains in order to acquire a clear understanding of it. By mixing and confusing the dates and names, more time is rendered necessary to find out any particular pensioner, or to ascertain any particular fact. And then, by representing the pensions as " payable out of *old stores*,"* out of the revenue of the Isle of Man, out of the $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in Barbadoes, many unreflecting persons are led to suppose, that the money does not come out of the pockets of the people, but proceeds from sources, which, if not exhausted by pensions, would be exhausted in some other way,

* Is the pension of the Earl of Munster paid out of the *old stores*? If so, a considerable quantity might be found in the royal palaces, which it would be an advantage to the nation, if they were got rid of. Perhaps Lady Bloomfield, of Hampton Court palace, and some others of that grade, might come under the character of *old stores*!!

and would be of no advantage to the nation ; not perceiving that all the sources above mentioned, are in fact sources of revenue, as much as the excise or the custom duty is, and that whatever is extracted from them for the purpose of paying pensions, must be added to the amount of taxes."

In the list of pensions granted in May 1804, was one of £616 to Mrs. Charlotte Sargent, wife of J. Sargent, Esq. in reversion to the said J. Sargent. On this, Cobbett facetiously expresses himself:—"What claims, Mrs. Sargent may have upon us, I know not, but that her husband has none, and never had any, cannot be denied. He was a merchant, he continued to be a merchant while secretary of the treasury, and he is still a merchant. He was in the public service three years, for which service he received £12,000. We left him where we found him, having put £12,000 in his pocket, and now, behold, we find him fastened upon us for £616 a year for life, or which is worse, for the life of his wife and himself. Why this provision for the wife first? Lord Chatham was too much of a patriot to accept of a coronet for himself, but accepted of it for his lady, taking care, however, afterwards, to slide it from her head to his own.* This has always appeared to me as an act of meanness, unpardonable in any man ; and really Mr. Sargent's obtaining a pension for his wife, with the reversion to himself, in case of her death, is something not much behind it. The philosophy of Lord Melville, who could so deliberately calculate, and even speculate upon the death of his son, as to secure the reversion of his place to himself, in case of such an accident, has been very much admired ; and there appears no good reason why the philosophy of Mr. Sargent should excite less admiration. Some persons, however, have ascribed the securing of the reversions, to excessive affection in the party so securing. For instance, they say, that a husband

* A similar farce has been played off at the present time. The lady of Sir John Campbell, the Attorney General, is elevated to the peerage. Sir John will remain a commoner, but the time may not be far distant, when he will make use of the patent of nobility, which he has in his pocket.

who dotes upon his wife, ought to secure a reversion of her pension, in order that her death may be sure to bring with it something by way of a set-off; something that may tend to make the world worth remaining in for a little while longer. After all, however, perhaps this is mere refinement, and that the obtaining the pension for the wife, and the reversion for the husband, would require no explanation, if one were to be admitted to the honour of *seeing their faces*. We should, it is probable, at once perceive, that the mode of the grant had been adopted upon the plain and unerring rules of the Insurance offices, and that, to all appearance at least, the lady's was, as the phrase is, "the better life of the two," but as there is no certainty in life, that gentleman had a mind to make assurance double sure."

Of the pension of £91 to Miss Rosalie HUYGHNES, Cobbett says, "that he verily believed that it was a feigned name to cover some *secret act*, that should not be disclosed." Indeed," he adds, "there are as many romance names on the Pension List, as in the volumes of a circulating library."

"Last upon the list," says Cobbett, "comes Lady Eleanor Auckland, with her £500 a year, and which £500 a year, I for my part, do most heartily grudge her. Her husband receives as a pension £2300 a year from the public; and observe, that he stands his chance of official emoluments besides, *being in place always as often as he can*, and when out of place, returning to his pension. Her children, some of them at least, are provided for at the public expense, reversions of sinecures are secured for them. And now comes Lady Eleanor Auckland, with her claim for £500 a year, in addition to what is enjoyed by her family. Am I told, that Lord Auckland is poor, and having a large family, has not wherewith to support an appearance suitable to his rank, without some aid from the minister? My answer is, that we did not compel Lord Auckland to assume that expensive rank; the assumption was his own choice, for his own and his family's gratification, and not in any degree for the advantage, or the gratification of the king or the people. It is one thing to apply the public

money in aid of the aristocracy of the kingdom, and another thing to apply it in the *creating* of a new aristocracy. The former, every man, who wishes to preserve the monarchy, will approve of, when the support is unconnected with corrupt influence; but the latter, who does not wish to see the monarchy destroyed, must earnestly reprobate. And yet it must be allowed, and cannot be contradicted by the most strenuous supporters of royalty, that it is the cause of more state paupers being brought upon the Pension List, than any other branch of the constitution. We hesitate not to say, that the debauchery and libertinism of George the Fourth, loaded the nation with a greater number of pensions to right honourable pimps and female demireps, than would pay the expense of the whole civil establishment of America.

In February 1806, Mr. Cobbett put forth the prospectus of his *Parliamentary Register*, which was to consist of 16 volumes, containing a full and accurate report of all the recorded proceedings, and of all the speeches in both Houses of Parliament, from the earliest times to the year 1803. Mr. Cobbett was induced to enter upon this speculation, in consequence of the great difficulties which those experienced, who had to consult the proceedings of Parliament of former times; in addition to which, the expense of obtaining the necessary books was so great, as to put it beyond the power of the generality of men to accomplish the design which they had in view. It was calculated by Cobbett, that to obtain the books necessary for a compilation of the parliamentary history of this country, would exceed £150, independently of the tedious task of wading through one hundred volumes in folio, which contain the Journals of both Houses of Parliament. Upon the supposition, however, that these difficulties were got over, another and still more formidable obstruction to the acquiring information, presented itself, which consisted, not merely in the bulk and number of the volumes, but also in the want of a good arrangement of the contents of most of them, and further, in the immense load of useless matter, quite unauthenticated, and very little connected with the real

proceedings of Parliament, to be found in most of them. In numerous instances, we find three fourths of the volume to consist of papers laid before Parliament, of mere momentary utility, or interesting only to individuals, repeated in subsequent and more correct statements, and now presenting nothing more than an incumbrance to the reader, and a constantly intervening obstacle to his researches; to which may be added, with respect to all the debates from Almon's inclusive downwards, that there is a total want of all that aid, which is afforded by well-contrived running titles, tables, and indexes, and which are so necessary in every voluminous work, particularly if it relate to the transactions of a long series of years. By the publication of his Parliamentary Register, Cobbett expected to remedy all these evils, and he succeeded in a great degree, but the speculation was by no means one of profit to him.

The death of Mr. Pitt drew forth the powers of Cobbett, in a most extraordinary manner, and in many pages of his Register, he exposes the conduct of the "heaven-born youth," as he styles him, in terms of the bitterest sarcasm and vituperation. "Not content," says Cobbett, "with saddling the country with pensions to the amount of half a million, he leaves a debt behind him, of £40,000, which the country, for his services, are called upon to pay, and to pay them too, out of those taxes imposed by himself, and which are already weighing the people of this country down to the earth. And here the first argument in favour of this measure, which presents itself for our examination, is that which was grounded upon a supposed admission of his *disinterestedness*; and this argument is the more worthy of notice, from its having been, not without exciting some degree of surprise, used both by Mr. Windham and Mr. Fox. But let Mr. Windham and Mr. Fox declare, whether that was a mark of disinterestedness, taking into view the millions upon millions, which were subsequently lavished upon Mr. Pitt's relations, private friends, school-fellows, and adherents, for whose subsistence in a life of splendour the people are now taxed, and if all

things remain unaltered, will continue to be taxed for half a century to come.* The clerkship of the pells, the disinterested, the heaven-born youth, generously gave away, and thereby eased the people of the payment of a pension of £3000 a year, and thereby too, secured to himself that popularity, which enabled him to retain his power, in defiance of every principle of the constitution, and which power again enabled him to make grants and pensions to the amount of more than half a million a year. But to confine ourselves to the mere personal view of the matter; mark the result, he generously foregoes the taking of £3000 a year for his life; he took quite enough without it; quite as much as any subject ought to receive out of the public purse; but that consideration aside, he generously foregoes £3000 a year for his life, he lives twenty years, and the people, the cajoled, the infatuated, the stupid people, who, when he rejected the £3000 a year for life, made the air ring with shouts of applause, are called upon to pay £40,000 to discharge his debts at his death. They are called upon to pay, and if any one amongst us hesitates, he is loaded with the foulest reproaches; they are, Good God! called upon to pay £40,000 in money, as a debt due to that disinterestedness, which they have over and over again so dearly paid for in popularity; but I am told that the heaven-born subject of these remarks had no notion of ever putting the people to this expense; that he had no notion of the people ever being called upon to pay in money, that which they had before so amply paid in disinterestedness: here, however, is a dilemma, not easily gotten out of by the utmost powers of rhetorical ingenuity; for if he did not entertain this notion, what shall we say of the moral honesty,

* In the exposition of the enormous amount granted by Pitt, in the way of pensions, to his friends and adherents, it is our design to refute the charge, brought at the present day, by the Tories against the Whigs, that the villany of the Pension List is to be ascribed to the latter. We admit that the Whigs have imposed some scandalous pensions upon the public; but Pitt was not merely satisfied with pensioning the favourite, but he granted it in reversion to the descendants through a dozen generations.

which could induce him to contract so large a debt, without the prospect of the ability to pay,* and which, during the continuance of a pretty long illness, could suffer the hour of dissolution to arrive, without having made any provision for payment. 'He looked to his friends.' May be so. But it must have been to friends rendered able to pay, by his largesses, by his generosity, by his munificence, all, yea all, and every part and particle of them, at the expense of the people; and, therefore, from whatever source he expected, or could even in possibility expect the payment to come, the choice of his defenders upon this score still lies, between sham disinterestedness and moral dishonesty; the former of which being perhaps the least reprehensible of the two, I cheerfully own that to that I attribute his conduct. Will I then not allow that the foregoing of pecuniary emoluments to himself, when he has such emoluments within his reach, is any mark at all of disinterestedness in a minister? In itself it is a mark of disinterestedness, but, as in all other cases, the motives, as illustrated by the general tenour of his conduct, must be taken into the account; and when we apply this standard to the motives of Mr. Pitt, is there in the whole kingdom, and not within the circle of his own pensioned, or job-fattened swarm, one man, who will attempt to maintain that he was disinterested. For a minister to merit the praise of disinterestedness, it will, I think, not be denied, that in his abstaining from taking to himself pecuniary emoluments, he must not, under the persuasion, that by so abstaining, he is benefiting the public, and of course, that the benefit will arise from a certain retrenchment of, or prevention of addition to the public expense. Admit this position, and deny it who will, for then the very ground of your argument slides from beneath you: admit this, next look at the pensions and

* An action of this kind, the legislature of the present day, has declared to be so criminal, as to subject the individual committing it, to a protracted imprisonment. The circumstance is, however, by no means new to us, that the great (we mean in rank) may commit many acts with impunity, for which those of a humbler grade are severely punished.

grants of William Pitt, concluding with the addition of £1500 a year to the sinecure salary of Lord Melville, and the new grant to the Duke of Athol; and then, with attitude erect, with eyes unblinking, and cheek unblushing, look at the people, weighed down under their accumulated burdens, and not only themselves, but their posterity; and awaiting the annunciation of the budget, as the helpless brood awaits the pouncing of the kite; then look at them, and then say that Mr. Pitt was a disinterested minister."

Scarcely were the debts of Mr. Pitt paid, to the great chagrin and annoyance of Mr. Cobbett, than another subject arose, which, if possible, excited his ire in a still stronger degree, and seduced him into the use of certain expressions, which might not be considered exactly loyal, or exactly becoming an individual, who had always been so loud in his praise of royalty, as one of the greatest blessings which a country can enjoy. This subject was nothing less than a message from his majesty, recommending to his faithful Commons, to make such further allowances to the junior branches of his family, as *the circumstances of the times*, and *the decreased value of money*, should render necessary. "Here are fine doings," exclaims Cobbett, "here is one of the effects of the measures of the heaven-born minister, by whose measures such a decrease has taken place in the value of money, that the members of the royal family can no longer live upon their incomes, and their father is obliged to come begging to his people, to enhance their salaries, in order to enable them to maintain the splendour necessary to their exalted rank." Lord Grenville, on taking the message of his majesty into consideration, declared, that so far from not acting in conformity to the wishes of the king, it was a matter of great surprise to him, *that his majesty had not made the application before*; and Lord Henry Petty, in the House of Commons, followed in the same strain, and proposed an addition of £6000 a year to each of the royal family, with the exception of the Duke of York, whose extreme modesty would not allow him to receive any further augmentation to

his income, for two reasons, first, *that the situation of the country would not allow it*, and secondly, that he thought, he already received quite enough from the pockets of the people; to which not a dissentient voice can be raised, considering to what uses he applied the sums, which the people did actually allow him. The whole increase of income to the royal family was £51,000!! a year, at a time when the Duke of York, one of their own members, declared, that the situation of the country would not allow of any increase to his income. On this augmentation Cobbett says, "Let it be observed, that this is £51,000 *annually*, that is £51,000 *of income*, that is, an annuity of £51,000, to be paid out of the taxes every year, and that, therefore, taking the average of the lives of the royal personages at thirty years now to come, the grant now to be made imposes taxes upon us, and upon our immediate children, to the gross amount of £1,530,000!!* Ought such a grant to be made, or ought it not? This is the question for us to answer. My answer is, that I am decidedly of opinion that such a grant ought not to be made, and for this opinion, the following are my reasons. It is stated in the message, that this grant is called for *by the circumstances of the times*—though, as the Duke of York said, *the circumstances of the country* would not allow it. It is, however, at best but a very vague phrase. *The decrease in the value of money* is a reason something more specific, but in the first place, be it remembered, that if money has decreased in value, the taxes have more than doubled in nominal amount. Be it remembered, that the poor rates have been augmented three fold. Be it remembered, that the pecuniary embarrassments of the country have gone on increasing. Be it remembered, that we are continually told, that to make pecuniary sacrifices, sacrifices of conveniences, of comforts.

* Thirty-six years have elapsed since Cobbett published these remarks, during which, three of the royal weights have, for the benefit of the nation, been kindly struck off the Pension List, or the Consolidated Fund, which is nearly the same thing, by the interference of death. The amount, however, received by the surviving branches amount to nearly two millions!!

and even of necessities, is now become indispensable for the sake of preserving the throne of our sovereign, and our own liberties; and *why should not the practice upon this precept extend to the royal family as well as to the people?* Lord Henry Petty, in his speech, dwelt upon the *advanced age* of the royal persons in question; but, I believe it will appear, that when their several pensions were settled, they had all arrived at the age, when they betook themselves to *separate* establishments,* except the maiden princesses, who were looking out for an establishment in some of the German pauper principalities; and it is evident, that their expenses can be no greater now than they were then, all of them still making part of the household of their royal father, and all of them liable to come to Parliament with a demand, and a fair one, for the means of supporting another state of life, when the removal to the German principalities should fortunately take place. The advance of age, therefore, appears to me to be no reason at all for the proposed augmentation, and let us remember that the advance of age has not come without its advantages. Most, if not all of the royal sons of his majesty, receive from the public purse salaries and emoluments now, to a considerable amount, which they did not receive at the time their pensions were granted. It was completely overlooked, and that quite wilfully by Lord Henry Petty, that all the male branches of the royal family were either colonels of regiments, or governors of fortresses, which they never saw in their lives, or islands, or provinces, which they never visited, but the people heartily wished them away again, or generals upon the staff, without ever having performed the duties of a general; and then the rangerships of the parks, those scandalous sinecures, have generally been looked upon as the cheese-parings and candle-ends of royalty, therefore, it becomes ridiculous to take the *bare* amount of the pension to one of the royal dukes, for instance, and place it against the amount of a gentleman's income, and

* This will peculiarly apply to the then Duke of Clarence, who was at that time living with Mrs. Jordan, who was separated from her husband, Mr. Ford.

then ask, whether this ought to be, whether under such pecuniary circumstances, the royal duke can possibly support the dignity due to his station. But not to say, how low must be the mind, that can find out *no means* other than money, of supporting dignity; this mode of representing the case is fallacious in the highest degree. The royal dukes have *palaces* or *ledges*, they have gardens and *parks*, not only rent free, but tax free; indeed, when we cast our eyes onwards from St. James's and its parks, to Hyde Park, to Kensington, to Kew, to Richmond, to Bushy, to Hampton Court, to Bagshot, to Windsor, when we cast our eyes over these immense domains, situated in the very garden of England, and when we consider the royal rights enjoyed in forests and other lands, are we not tempted to ask, what more can be wanting to the dignity and splendour of the king and his family, however numerous that family may be. Nor should we forget, that though each branch of the royal family be separated in point of mere locality, from the household family of the king, nothing can cut off any branch of it from the share of the splendour, which belongs to the throne. Does not every younger child of a noble family, though without a penny of fortune, still enjoy a share of the honours of that family? And where is the man, who will pretend that, in order to support the aristocracy, it is necessary that every younger son of a lord should have an income equal to, or surpassing that of any other commoner. Great stress has been laid upon the Duke of York not coming forward for an augmentation to his income; it would have been a scandal to him if he had, for, independently of his rangerships, and other sly and secret sinecures, he was in possession of an income of £35,000, a year.*

* Men are often praised for acts, which, if properly scrutinized, would turn out to their shame. The Duke of York dared not advance any demand, for there is very little doubt that the following item on the credit side of the Civil List would have peeped forth, "By amount of sums *advanced* to his royal Highness the Duke of York, to be paid by instalments at £1000 quarterly, £54,300, 17. 6." Quere, Did the duke ever pay his instalments?

It cannot have escaped the memory of those acquainted with the politics of those times, that just as the Income Tax Bill was about to pass, a motion was made from the Treasury Bench, "To exempt from the tax all stock or dividends *the property of his majesty*, in whatever *name* they might stand." This motion was carried, by which it was tacitly acknowledged, that his majesty had property in the funds, "Where then," says Cobbett, "would have been the harm of advising his majesty to apply that property to the use of his children, as in the case with all other fathers, and if such advice had been given by the ministers, where is the man who will doubt that it would have been *cheerfully* followed? * Had I been a minister, I would have given such advice, and had I been a member of Parliament, one of the grounds upon which I would have opposed the new grants, would have been, that the royal parent of the grantees, was possessed of funds unemployed, and not necessary to the support of the dignity and splendour of the crown. It is not for me to say whence his majesty has derived his funded property; but, it appears most singular, that an application to Parliament should be made in 1804, for grants of public money to pay off the arrears of the Civil List, that is, to pay off the bills of tradesmen, and the wages of servants, when at the same time, both the king and queen were accumulating money, and investing it secretly in the foreign funds.

When the question was debated in the house, if it deserve the name of a debate, as in such a corrupt and profligate parliament, there was only *one* member (Sir Ridley Colborne) who ventured to express disapprobation of the

* We, for one, do express our doubt, that it would have been *cheerfully* complied with, on the contrary, we give it as our decided opinion that it would not have been complied with at all. It was well known that both the king and the queen had large property in the funds, and the former not being desirous that his subjects should know the extent of his funded property, invested very large sums in the Venice bank. But would either the king or queen have lent the Duke of York £50,000 out of their funded property, to be paid by instalments? No. And why? They would not have approved of the security.

measure. George Rose, said, that as to the offices, which some of the princes *may* hold, (nay, which they do hold) at *the royal pleasure*, they should not be taken into contemplation, when the question was respecting a permanent provision. "No?" exclaims Cobbett, "and why not? I would ask this true and trusty host of Cuffnells? why not? Are not the pensions of ambassadors, of under secretaries of state, and others granted with the express provision, that if the grantee should hold any place with a salary equal to the pension, the pension shall cease during the tenure of such place? And what is the reason that the principle, upon which this condition is made, with respect to others, should not be acted upon with respect to those members of the royal family, who choose to fill places? Were it my desire to see ill befall the king and his family, I should hold my tongue upon such subjects as this, or rather, I should endeavour to cause the number and amount of such grants to be increased a thousand fold; but convinced as I am, from as much reflection as my mind is capable of, from as much and as close observation, and as much actual experience as most men have had to guide them in the forming of their opinions; convinced as I am that *kingly government* is the best of all possible governments, that the constitution of England unimpaired is the best of all constitutions, and whatever specious appearances may exist to the contrary, in any part of the world; it is here in England, where men do, after all, enjoy the greatest portion of real freedom; convinced as I am of this, I am willing to do all in my power for the preserving of this constitution of government; and, although I know the above remarks will not be palatable, though I know they will reach the ear of royalty, in company with the malicious hiss of those sycophants, nest upon nest, whom the sunshine of a court seldom fails to warm into life, the royal hearers may be assured, that he who *tells* them what *others* think, is their real friend, and that in an hour of danger, if such hour should come, they will find one such man worth ten thousand flatterers."

The augmentation of the income of the royal family having

been agreed to, it must have been the wish of every good subject to see it *judiciously* expended; to see it, agreeably to the declarations of ministers, employed in supporting the **DIGNITY** of the several persons, on whom it had been bestowed; and under the influence of this wish, what must have been the public feeling, at reading the following account, ostentatiously published in all the London newspapers.

We will give the account as Cobbett gives it, for the gratification of laying before our readers, one of the most severe and biting sarcasms, which ever flowed from his pen.

“The Duke of Clarence’s birth-day was celebrated with much splendour in Bushy Park on Thursday. About five o’clock, the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York, Kent, *Sussex*, and Cambridge, &c. arrived from reviewing the German Legion. After they had dressed for dinner, they walked in the pleasure grounds, accompanied by the Lord Chancellor, Earl and *Countess* of Athlone and *daughter*, Lord Leicester, Baron Hotham and *Lady* Baron Eden, the Attorney General, Colonels Paget and M’Mahon, Sergeant *Marshall*, and a number of other persons. At seven o’clock, the second bell announced the dinner, *when* the PRINCE took Mrs. JORDAN by the hand, led her into the dining room, and seated her at the head of the table. The Prince took his seat at her right hand, and the Duke of York at her left. The Duke of Cambridge sat next to the Prince, the Duke of Kent next to the Duke of York, and the Lord Chancellor next to his Royal Highness. The DUKE OF CLARENCE sat at the foot of the table. It is hardly necessary to say, the table was sumptuously covered with every thing the season could afford. After dinner, the DUKE’S NUMEROUS FAMILY were introduced, and admired by the Prince, the royal dukes, and the whole of the company. An infant in arms, with a most beautiful white head of hair, was brought into the dining room, by the nursery maid. The Duke of Kent’s band played some of the chorusses and movements from Haydn’s oratorio of the CREATION, by command of his Royal High-

ness. After dinner, the Prince gave the Duke of Clarence, with three times three. The Duke of Clarence gave the Duke of York and the Army. His Royal Highness's band then struck up his *celebrated March*."

The following are the comments of Cobbett on this extraordinary affair, which was an outrage against all decorum, in placing a woman of Mrs. Jordan's character at the head of the table, where sat the heir apparent to the throne, four of his royal brothers, and some of the female nobility, who, *under any other circumstances*, would have considered it as one of the greatest insults, which could be offered to them, in supposing them fit companions for the mistress of a royal duke.

"I have given the particulars of this disgraceful business," says Cobbett, "and I wish to see the statement contradicted by order of his royal highness the Prince of Wales, or of some of his brothers; then observing and explicitly stating that my object is to remove the evil impression, which its publication must necessarily tend to produce upon the minds of a people, who, *by the express commands of his majesty*, have read to them from the pulpit, four times a year, a long exhortation against vice and immorality, and who have fresh in their minds the large grants of money recently made for the declared purpose of enabling the several branches of the royal family 'to support the *dignity* of their station;' thus previously shewing, I would beg leave, as a beginning of my comments upon the statement as quoted above, to ask the writer of it, *what march* he means, when he talks of the *celebrated March* of the Duke of York; and I would further ask him, what necessity there was to remind the people of England of the Duke of York's marches, and why the writer could not have so far got the better of his too obvious disposition, as to suffer these celebrated *marches* to rest quiet and unattended to.* The representing of the ORATORIOS of the

* History has preserved in its records some of these *celebrated marches*, the first and foremost of which took place at Dunkirk, which, however, there lost the appellation of a march, to be distinguished ever after, on account of the

CREATION, and arranged too by the Duke of Kent, applied to the purpose of ushering in the NUMEROUS FAMILY of the Duke of Clarence; the thus representing the Duke of Kent as employed in an act, whereby the procreation of a brood of illegitimate children, is put in comparison with the great work of the Almighty, is, in this writer, an act of the most insidious disloyalty, and of blasphemy the most daring. We all know that the Duke of Clarence is not married, and that, therefore, if he had children, these children must be bastards, and that the father must be guilty of a crime, in the eye of the law as well as of religion; and that he would exhibit a shocking example of that vice and immorality, which his royal father's proclamation, so regularly read to us by our pastors, commands us to shun and abhor, and enjoins upon the magistrates to mark out and to punish wherever they shall find them existing amongst us. While we hear this command so often repeated to us, and know that, from the form in which it is conveyed, it comes immediately from his majesty's mind and conscience, can we possibly suppose that he would wink at acts in his own family, such as are described in the statement I have given! And when to this consideration, we add the many others that present themselves upon the subject, can we hesitate to declare that to represent the Duke of Clarence as having a 'numerous family of children,' is foully to slander his Royal Highness; and that further to represent him as ostentatiously exhibiting 'this numerous family' in public, and in the immediate presence of all his royal brothers, and of the Lord Chancellor rapidly of the movement, as *Dunkirk Races*; and where, but for a little treachery on the part of *Dumouriez*, the royal duke would have been taken prisoner and marched off to Paris. In this celebrated march he lost for England the finest park of artillery that ever left her shores. His next celebrated march was in Holland, where, but for the treachery of General *Dacodels*, who was bribed by the surrender to him of the whole stud of the royal duke, England would have had to deplore the loss for some time to come, of the great military talent which he fancied he possessed, and to commemorate which, his foolish countrymen have perched him on a monument, towering ever every other surrounding object, illustrative of his exalted talent and imperishable fame.

of England, and others of the nobles of the land, is to accuse him of a gratuitous and wanton insult against the laws, the manners, and morals of the country. This representation and accusation I must, and I do, therefore, consider as *false*, and I am confirmed in this my opinion, when I find it also asserted, that the Prince of Wales *took Mother Jordan by the hand*, and in the presence of a *countess*, a *countess's daughter*, and a *baroness*, *seated her at the head of the table*, taking his place upon her right hand; his royal brothers arranging themselves according to their rank, on both sides of the table, *the post of honour being nearest Mother Jordan*,* who, the last time I saw her, cost me eight-pence, in her character of Nell Jobson! This part of the account proves the falsehood of the whole. But though, amongst persons, who are at all acquainted with the characters of the illustrious personages, who are, by the writer in the Courier newspaper, represented as having been actors in the scene, there can be no doubt that the whole representation is false; more especially when we take into view the pious and strenuously enforced precepts of the royal father's proclamation; yet, amongst that part of his majesty's subjects who know nothing of the manners of the great, except what they learn through the channel of the newspapers, doubts upon the subject may prevail, nay, such persons may actually *believe* the representations of the Courier, particularly as it has been given, and *in nearly the same words too*, by all the other newspapers, and, therefore, being fully convinced that the representation must produce, in whatever degree it is believed, an impression extremely injurious to the character of the parties named, not less injurious to the manners and morals of the people, and eventually greatly dangerous to the stability of the throne; for this plain reason,

* It is generally supposed that Mrs. Jordan was the repudiated wife of a Mr. Jordan, the fact is, that she was never married to a person of the name of Jordan, nor had any further right to the name, than that it was given to her at Bath, to make her debut in, according to the well-known story, in consequence of her being sent to fetch a certain chamber utensil, commonly called a *jordan*.— Could the Duke of Clarence possibly have descended lower?

that the most virtuous part of the people, that part of them in whose minds truth and justice are predominant, that part of them on whom alone reliance could safely be placed, would infallibly be the most disgusted, and the most alienated by the belief of such a representation. Being fully convinced of these important truths, I venture to beseech the royal parties, whose names have been so unwarrantably brought before the public in the above-cited publication, to cause a formal contradiction thereof to be publicly made. I venture to beseech them to reflect on the fatal consequences, which have uniformly ensued, and especially in recent instances, from proceedings such as are described in this publication, and to remember, that to be blameless, as they *doubtless* are, in this *and in all other cases of the kind*, is not enough, unless they are also thought to be blameless. I venture to beseech them, above all things, to reflect upon what must be the natural and inevitable effect produced in the minds of the people, if they were once to believe that any portion of the grants made out of the taxes, in times like the present, was expended upon *objects*, such as those described in this publication; and lastly, as I have in proportion to my means and capacity, done as much as any private individual ever did in support of the throne, and the *reputation* (?) of the royal family, I hope it will not be thought presumptuous, now that I make them a tender of my pages and my pen, for the purpose of making and promulgating that contradiction, which every truly loyal subject is so anxious to see."

As might be naturally supposed, no attention was paid to Cobbett's offer, and, in fact, he knew well that the whole *statement* was founded on truth. The irony, however, which pervades the whole of his strictures on so scandalous an affair, *is truly* worthy of his pen; and if the feelings of the individuals to whom he alludes, had not been previously well cauterized by repeated inflictions of the lash from other quarters, rendering them in future callous to any further castigation, they

must have smarted under the severe punishment which Cobbett bestowed upon them.

From this loathsome subject we turn to one of a more edifying nature, and that is, the controversy in which Cobbett was at this time engaged, in regard to the utility of the learned languages, the whole of it arising from the use of the two words *ut possidetis*, which, in the opinion of Cobbett, might have been given in plain English, and not in a foreign jargon; which, according to Cobbett's opinion, few understand. "Do those who make use of such phrases," says Cobbett, "which the stupidest wretch on earth might learn to use as well as they in a few hours, nay, which a parrot would learn, or which a high Dutch bird-catcher would teach to a bullfinch or a tomtit in the space of a month, and do they think in good earnest, that this last relic of the mummery of monkery, this playing off upon us of a few gallipot words, will make us believe that they are learned. Learning, truly so called, consists in the possession of knowledge, and in the capacity of communicating that knowledge to others; and as far as my observation will enable me to speak, what are called the *learned* languages operate as a bar to the acquirement of real learning. I already hear some pedagogue or pedant exclaim, 'This is precisely the reasoning of the fox without a tail.' But to bring this matter to the test, I hereby invite the *learned* gentlemen of the two Universities to a discussion upon the subject. *I assert that what they call the LEARNED LANGUAGES are improperly so called, and that as a part of general education, they are worse than useless.* Two months will afford time enough for any of the gentlemen just spoken of, to disprove these positions, I will therefore give them until Lady-day next. I will publish their defence of their calling, and if I do not fairly beat them in the controversy, and that too, in the space of twenty columns of the Register, I will then beg their pardon, and will allow, that to be able to speak or write in a language which the people do not understand, is a proof of learning. But until then, I shall dissent from the opinion, that non

but clear streams are shallow, and that the muddier the water the deeper the well."

Our limits will not allow us to enter at full length into this interesting controversy, which called forth on both sides an extraordinary display of talent and erudition, and during the whole of which, Cobbett came in for no small portion of abuse, intermixed at times, with a degree of scurrility far beneath the dignity of an educated man and a classical scholar to use. We cannot refrain from inserting the following letter, as it appears to have riveted the attention of Cobbett more than any other, at the same time that he bore the abuse which it contains, with that imperturbable good humour, which was one of the chief features of his character.

"I am sorry to see in your Register, that you are disposed to turn your attention from political subjects, in which you are no doubt qualified to instruct and amuse your readers, to others of a literary nature, in which you are not so competent to do either. The use of the words *uti possidetis* in the late debate on the negotiation for peace, has to be sure thrown you into a most hideous rage, though you, I think, on your own principle, have least occasion to quarrel with them, inasmuch as you allow they may be easily understood by the stupidest wretch in a week; and from this you are led into a bitter philippic against classical erudition in general, with which by the way, the words have nothing to do, they being, as you tell us, a relic of the mummery of monkery, which mummery it was the effect of classical erudition to abolish. Nor will any pedagogue or pedant be easily inclined to compare you to the fox in the fable, inasmuch as he was conscious of the loss he had sustained, but your want of learning, though obvious enough to others, is not equally so to yourself. An overweening confidence in what you do possess, has blinded you to the value of attainments which you do not possess; and, indeed, from the subject and manner of your late challenge to the two Universities, I am almost induced to join in an opinion, which I heard suggested some

time ago, that the warmth of your feelings, and the inslence of success *were operating a gradual derangement of your intellects.* The two Universities may probably never hear of your appeal to them; and it is still less likely that they will pay any attention to it, but I think it not difficult for one who knows but little of either of them, to disprove as much of your assertion respecting the inutility of the Greek and Latin languages, in a general plan of education, as has any thing of sense or meaning in it; for as to your objection to their being called learned; that can only be a cavil about words; they are not called so exclusively, they are as often termed the dead; or the ancient languages, and more usually described, as I have done them above, by appellations taken from the country where they were spoken; and when you have shown the world a more proper term than any or all of these, the world may, if it pleases, adopt your improvement, but it will be without any the slightest alteration in the intrinsic value of the learning and knowledge their respective authors possess. 'Learning,' you say, 'consists in the possession of knowledge, and in the capacity of communicating that knowledge to others.' And did the Greek and Roman writers possess the knowledge, or were they without the faculty of communicating it to others, in apposite, perspicuous, and elegant language? If neither of these suppositions be true, the inference which you draw, *viz.* that the learned languages operate as a bar to real learning, has no relation whatever to your premises, that learning consists in the possession of knowledge, and in the faculty of communicating it. But if you really presume to say, that the ancients have written nothing; which it is not waste of time for us to know, I shall not upbraid you with the trite adage, that no one ever despised learning but those, who had it not, because I still think, you do not deserve such a reproof; but I will venture to say, that no man, who ever wrote on any subject, so much as you have done on that of politics, has been known to entertain a similar opinion; and further, that you will find some difficulty in persuading mankind to sacrifice their faith

in all authors, both ancient and modern, both foreign and domestic at the shrine of your assurance. The most instructive of the Roman poets, has enjoined his countrymen to take Greek patterns of fine writing into their hands, and to study them by night and by day :

Nocturnâ versate manu, versâe diurna.—HOR.

And there can be no doubt that the same advice is at present applicable, both to Greeks and Romans. What was it that drew Europe from the sink of barbarism, in which it had been plunged for so many ages, but the discovery of ancient manuscripts, the dispersion and study of them? Every author who has treated of this subject, either professedly or incidentally, has ascribed the present improved state of society to this primary cause. I am aware that the authority of great names does not weigh with one, who is but little acquainted with the merits of their possessors, and quotations are superfluous, where they would be endless. I shall just, however, mention to you, that you will have to contend with Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Mosheim, Voltaire, Burnett, and others too numerous to mention. Neither do I mean to say, that a child of the nineteenth century will not grow up somewhat more enlightened, without the study of ancient literature, than one of the fourteenth; it will no doubt partake of the general diffusion of knowledge around it. But it comes into the world with no new faculties; it has no new senses. What has enlarged its mind, and increased its stock of ideas five hundred years ago, will do the same now. A man of eminence in literature, cannot at his decease place his posterity upon the summit to which he has climbed, if he could, it would be unnecessary to tread the same ground over again, his children might go on ascending from the point where their father left them. But no, every individual must tread the steep for himself, some may mount faster indeed, and some slower, but each must mount for himself. Aristotle told Alexander, there was no *royal* way of acquiring know-

ledge, and I doubt much whether you can show us any *vulgar* one. A ready child will find no material obstruction to his acquisition of knowledge, in the merely learning any language in which knowledge may be contained. A slow one will attain to great learning in no way. Those in the intermediate stages, will acquire each his proportionate degree of improvement, but be assured that none can hope to slip out of the tried and beaten path, and arrive first at the goal. So much as to the general plan of education, and now as to the effects resulting from it. 'As far as my observation will enable me to speak, what are called the learned languages, operate as a bar to real learning.' No sentence was, I believe, ever more preposterously dogmatical, more gravely ridiculous, nor will I believe, for the honour of your understanding, that you ever made any observation on the subject till the moment you were writing the words. For, in reality, this notable sentence, this Pythagorean aphorism, this *spœ dixit*, nay, don't start at the expression, there is the same reason for your being in amity with it, which you gave for quarrelling with other two harmless latin words; 'They may be understood by the stupidest wretch on earth, they may be taught to a bullfinch, a tomtit, &c.' After all, I say, your only meaning can be, that the easiest way to acquire learning is to neglect a part of it!! Indeed, the matter may be easily enough ascertained, whether the learned languages operate as a bar to real learning, by a reference to history and fact. There have been, at all times since the revival of letters, men of classical erudition, and men of no classical erudition. Which have done most in the cause of science? Take for example the beginning of last century, the men of classical learning were Steele, Addison, Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, &c. Their earlier productions were translations from those languages,* which you by way of derision, and I out of respect, call learned; every page of their more mature writings teems

* This statement of the opponent of Cobbett, is not borne out by the fact. With the single exception of Pope, not one of the celebrated men mentioned, is known to English literature, as a translator from the dead languages.

with recommendations of the study or transfusion of the spirit of ancient authors. These are the men, who with the avenues 'to real learning' barred, as you suppose, against them, whose time and labour had been employed, as you tell us, in a manner 'worse than uselessly;' these are they who have instructed and inspired mankind for the last century, and will probably continue to do so till the end of the world. Now, what were your friends of the same period doing, who had no such bar operating in their way to real learning? There might then be probably about seven millions of such in this kingdom; of these seven millions, one million might be able to read and write; one hundred thousand capable of writing their native language correctly; a twentieth part of these to acquire real learning, without the obstruction of the ancient languages; what have these five thousand men done in the cause of literature, compared with their five contemporaries mentioned above? Nay, if there were but five hundred of them, or only fifty in the whole kingdom, what knowledge did they possess? How, and where have they communicated it to others, how has the world benefited by their attainments? Some such men there must have been, except you mean to maintain that there were no men of natural parts and science to improve them, but those whom I have mentioned above; and that those were such misled creatures, that they immediately began to clog the talents God had given them, by an application to such learning as was worse than useless. Where then are the works of their rivals, who were free from this clog and obstruction? What are their opinions? Refer me to their writings. The same obstructions will apply to every other period, both of British and European history. I shall just select as a further proof, one more, where probably at first sight, the comparison may appear more favourable to your opinions, I mean the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The men of classical erudition in her time, were Sydney, Raleigh, Hooker, Bacon, &c. Will any man in his senses deny to those illustrious persons, the possession of knowledge, and the faculty of communicating it to

others. Yet not only all of them were excellently versed in the learned languages, but the three latter could not have moved one step in their respective walks of science, without the most extensive knowledge of them. Opposed to these and to many more, whom I could mention, you may perhaps be inclined to place Shakespeare. But there are many reasons why he can be of no service to your cause, for, in the first instance, your position is, that the learned languages operate as a real bar to learning. Now Shakespeare, it is allowed on all hands, that whatever he did, was by dint of genius only. Johnson calls it 'intuition;' so that where learning is the subject, he is quite out of the question. Hume considers him as a person without any instruction, either from the world or books; and Dryden describes him as too lofty to need being raised by the stilts of learning, or something to that effect. But even were this not the case, and supposing him to have derived great advantages from the study of whatever English authors might exist in his day, yet what such a genius can do, forms no general rule for a general plan of education, or of any thing else. Corelli, I believe it was, could play an air on the violin with all the strings loose, yet few musical professors would recommend the want of pegs and rosin on that account. In this manner I might go, and show that all the knowledge which the world possesses, except perhaps in some of the mere mechanical arts, and the phenomena of nature, has sprung from the same source, from men of great talents, cultivated by learning of every kind, but more especially classical. One advantage derived from the study of ancient literature, is so appropriate to the nature of your employment, that I am tempted to give it you, in your own words of the enlightened author. 'In England the love of freedom, which, unless checked, flourishes extremely in all liberal natures, acquired new force, and was regulated by more enlarged views, suitably to that cultivated understanding, which became every day more common among men of birth and education. A familiar acquaintance with the precious remains of antiquity,

excited in every generous breast, a passion for a limited constitution, and begat an emulation of those manly virtues, which the Greek and Roman authors, by such animating examples, as well as pathetic expressions, recommend to us.'

"You have made a reference to Milton, in the column following these your remarks on education. Have you never heard of his reading the ancient authors, 'till his mind was full fraught?' Of his employing his daughters in the same task? Of his warming his imagination from them before he sat down to compose? From you he might have learned that such labours were 'useless,' that his time was worse than misspent in them, in short, that learning was not *real* learning, if it was not written in plain English. It will be some testimony of the esteem in which I hold your talents, if I venture to recommend the application of them; confine your remarks to the Jenkinsons and the Roses of the present time, wield your powerful pen in the obtainment of a reform in Parliament, and the abolition of useless sinecures and pensions, but do not have any thing to do with the Platos and Xenophons of antiquity; you have shewn that you can express with energy, the feelings which are excited in ingenuous breasts, by the passing occurrences of the day, and that ought to satisfy you. Thucydides and Tacitus were men of generous natures; they have bequeathed their gathered stores as an eternal inheritance to posterity, while the placemen and pensioners are sucking the blood of the present generation; the former would enrich the world after their decease, the latter are plundering their country during their lives. Lest I should appear to pay an undue respect to classical literature, an exclusive deference to ancient authors, I shall conclude with Petrarch's recommendation of books in general, it is taken, to avoid the pedantry of a learned language, from the Abbé de Lade's life of that elegant poet, and great restorer of letters. But the biographer was not aware that Petrarch had himself borrowed the ideas from his English friend Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham: *Ce sont des gens de tous les pays, et de tous les siècles distingués à la*

guerre, dans la robe, et dans les lettres ; aisès à vivre, toujours à mes ordres, je les fair venir quand je veux, et je le renvoye de meme ; ils n'ont jamais d'humeur, et repondent à toutes mes questions."

That the subject of the learned languages had excited an extraordinary interest, may be gathered from the circumstance, that Mr. Cobbett received between forty and fifty communications on the subject, the majority of them written by individuals evidently of high classical attainments, and well able to refute the position, which Cobbett had so presumptuously and indiscreetly laid down, and in which his best friends were obliged to allow that he had grossly committed himself. A stronger proof of which cannot be given, than that, although Cobbett had pledged himself in a certain number of pages in his Register, to refute all the arguments which might be brought against him, he tacitly withdrew from the contest, and never published his threatened refutation.

The publication of the Register had now continued without interruption for several years, during which Mr. Cobbett had established himself as the most powerful political writer of the day, when, in an unguarded moment, he inserted in his Register on the 1st July 1809, some severe strictures on the flogging of some of the privates of the Cambridgeshire local militia, which attracted the notice of the Attorney General, Sir Vicary Gibbs, one of the most waspish, biting, snarling curs of a lawyer, that ever infected the courts of law with his breath, and that indeed is not saying a little. Mr. Cobbett, as the author of the letter, was accordingly indicted, and the action came on to be tried in the court of King's Bench, on Friday, June 15th, before Lord Ellenborough, the same judge, who had presided at the former trial of Cobbett, for a libel on the Lord Hardwicke and Mr. Plunkett.

It must be previously observed, that an interval of nearly twelve months had taken place, between the publication of the libel and the trial, but the delay was attributed by the attorney general to Mr. Cobbett himself, who, owing to his

non-residence in town, he then living at Botley, had taken advantage of the delay, which the law allowed him, to put off his trial, or otherwise it would have come on in the Michaelmas term of 1809. In order fully to understand the nature of this libel, for which Cobbett was amerced in such heavy damages, we must give the paragraph which appeared in the Courier newspaper, and on which the libel was founded.

London, Saturday, July 1, 1809.

"MOTTO. The mutiny amongst the **LOCAL MILITIA**, which broke out at Ely, was *fortunately* suppressed on Wednesday, by the arrival of four squadrons of the German Legion cavalry from Bury, under the command of General Auckland. Five of the ringleaders were tried by a court marshal, and sentenced to receive **FIVE HUNDRED LASHES EACH**, part of which punishment they received on Wednesday, and a part was remitted. A stoppage for their knapsacks was the ground of complaint which excited this mutinous spirit, which occasioned the men to surround their officers and demand what they deemed their arrears. The first division of the German Legion halted yesterday at Newmarket, on their return to Bury."

On the foregoing passage Cobbett built the following observations.

"SUMMARY OF POLITICS. LOCAL MILITIA and GERMAN LEGION. See the motto, English reader! see the motto, and then pray do recollect all that has been said about the way in which Buonaparte raises his soldiers. Well done, Lord Castlereagh! This is just what was thought your plan would produce. Well said, Mr. Huskisson! It was really not without reason you dwelt with so much earnestness upon the great utility of the foreign troops, whom Mr. Wardle appeared to think of no utility at all. Poor gentleman! He little thought how great a genius might find employment for such troops. He little imagined they might be made the means of compelling Englishmen to submit to that sort of discipline, which is so conducive to the producing in them a

disposition to defend the country at the risk of their lives. Let Mr. Wardle look at my motto, and then say whether the German soldiers are of no use. *Five hundred lashes!* each. Aye! that is right, flog them! flog them!! flog them!!! they deserve it and a great deal more. They deserve a flogging at every meal time. Lash them daily! lash them daily. What! shall the rascals dare to *mutiny*, and that too, when the German legion is so near at hand. Lash them! lash them!! lash them!!! they *deserve it*. O yes, they deserve a double-tailed cat. Base dogs, what, mutiny for the sake of the price of a knapsack. Lash them! flog them!! lash them!!! base rascals. Mutiny for the price of a goat skin, and then upon the appearance of the German soldiers, they take a flogging as quietly as so many trunks of trees. I do not know what sort of a place Ely is, but I really should like to know how the inhabitants looked one another in the face, while this scene was exhibiting in the town. I should like to have been able to see their faces, and to hear their observations to each other at the time.

“This occurrence at home will, one would hope, teach the *loyal*, a little caution in speaking of the means, which Napoleon employs, or rather which they say he employs, in order to get together, and discipline his conscripts. (The Attorney General here observed on the sneer in which the phrase *loyal* was couched.) There is scarcely one of those loyal persons, who has not at various times cited the hand-cuffs, and other means of *force*, said to be used in drawing out the young men of France; there is scarcely one of the loyal, who has not cited these means as a proof that the people of France hate Napoleon and his government; assist with *reluctance* in his wars, and would fain see another revolution. I hope, I say, the loyal will hereafter be more cautious in drawing such conclusions, now that they see that our ‘gallant defenders,’ not only require physical restraint in certain cases, but even a little blood drawn from their backs, and that too with the aid and assistance of the German troops. Yes, I hope the loyal will be a little more on their guard, in drawing con-

elusions against Napoleon's popularity. At any rate, every time they do, in future, burst out into execrations against the French, for suffering themselves to be chained together, and forced at the point of the bayonet to do military duty."

The Attorney General having finished the perusal of this passage, for the writing of which, Cobbett as the author, was dragged into a court of law, proceeded to give his own opinion of the dangerous tendency of it. "I," said the learned counsel, "here impute to the defendant, that he charges the government with cruelty, that he charges the military authorities with cruelty, that he suggests to mutineers the injustice of their sentence, and that he ridicules the patience with which they endured their punishment, and the compunction with which they regretted their offence. He, the defendant, tells you that it is said as an extreme of cruelty in the French governor, that he drags the youth of France to join his armies, chained and hand-cuffed, and then compares this act of tyranny to the just punishment of the local militia. They rose in actual mutiny, they surrounded their officers, they committed dangerous breaches of the public peace. The ringleaders were brought to trial by the known and regular forms of the service, they were found guilty, and guilty as they were, a portion of their punishment was remitted, and this he, the defendant, holds up as equal to the unprovoked practices of the French ruler on the rights of his people. He compares the mild and regular process of the British law, mild in its progress, mild in its conclusion, to the unhallowed licentiousness of an authority, capricious in its justice, and tyrannical in its punishment. There is something peculiarly revolting in all this, to the feelings which still distinguish the hearts and actions of generous and British men. The German Legion are talked of in the libel, as if fit for no other work than to stand by, and see the oppressive exercise of military vengeance, men only fitted to keep guard at executions. But what has degraded these otherwise brave and honourable men? They are foreigners, they have been driven

from their own country, and have sought shelter in ours; they have offered no unworthy price for protection, they have offered their blood, and they have shed it in battle, for the glory and safety of their adopted country. They have seen their own country swept by a fearful visitation, and rather than submit to the government of France, they came to ours; though there might be men in whose breasts that would be no merit, they were received into the service of their legitimate king, and their service was worthy of their cause. Thus far as to the tendency of the libel, with respect to the local militia and the German Legion. As to the effect intended to be produced by it on the country, the obvious consequence would be, to prevent the people from entering into that description of force, which, from the nature of the times, was required by the situation of the country. Whatever the author of the libel can have to say in his defence, will of course be heard patiently; no advantage for the conduct of his defence will be denied him; but the opinion which I have now delivered on the subject of the paper, is my serious, decided, personal opinion on its true tendency."

The libel was then handed up to the proper officer of the court, and read.

Bagshaw and Budd, the printer and publisher of the Register, were included in the prosecution, but they suffered judgment to go by default, Mr. Cobbett admitting that he was sole proprietor of the Register, and author of the alleged libel.

The defence of Mr. Cobbett, is one which will be read with the greatest interest, inasmuch as it furnished him with an opportunity of refuting many of the calumnies, which had been circulated about him; and as it was the first time that he had publicly spoken in a court of law, his character showed itself in a new light, and made even the Attorney General himself quail under the acknowledged superiority of his talent.

Mr. Cobbett commenced by declaring to the jury, that no part of the delay in the prosecution, was to be attributed to

him. He was anxious to have so powerful and weighty a matter settled as the law would direct, and as soon as would be permitted by the law. It was not his intention to dilate upon the formidable apparatus of charges, which the king's Attorney General had set in motion against him; he would pass by all this thunder of technical phrases, and harsh, legal, and overpowering accusations, which were, after all, little more than the customary declamation of the law officers of the crown. "It is my wish that the intention, which was in my mind, at the time of writing the paper in question, may be the thing tried, for my intention would fully acquit me. You are not to place too solemn a reliance upon the judgment of the Attorney General; he is not infallible. I believe, I firmly and conscientiously believe, that in the whole world, there is not a man so much calumniated as myself. The most false and atrocious calumnies have been spread concerning me, and my motives, and my life. I would not say it as of certain knowledge, nor as intending to say a harsh thing, but I believe that these calumnies have found much of their propagation from the influence of the ministry. I complain of these calumnies, because, if you believe them; you must condemn me, I must deserve punishment. His lordship will permit me to mention one or two of those facts. You have seen in the streets posted up, papers pretending to give an account of my life. I am in these, accused by a person, whom I can prove to have had a pension of two hundred pounds a year, till Lord Sidmouth struck him off, of a transaction, that ought to have degraded any man. It states that I, having received from government four thousand pounds, *for spreading* a certain pamphlet throughout the country, diverted the money to my own purposes, and refused to give *any further* account of it up to this day. On this point I have written to Lord Sidmouth, and have received his answer."

Mr. Cobbett then read his letter, requesting from Lord Sidmouth a public answer to the calumny. His lordship's answer was as follows :

Sir,

I have but just received your letter, requesting my declaration as to your having received £4000 for the alleged purposes. I think it only due to you to answer you as soon as possible, and to say, that the transaction never had any existence.

SIDMOUTH.

“After having done away this charge, I must refute another. I am stigmatized as having been frequently liable to prosecutions like the present. Gentlemen, I once before stood in this court,* not on my own account, but that of a learned judge. I published the letter, and the hand discovered the author. But so little was any thing in the shape of guilt, connected with that conviction, that the learned judge immediately afterwards obtained a pension of £1200 a year. I may say further, and say it as some proof of the proper feeling of Mr. Perceval, since he has ceased to be attorney general, that in his capacity as chancellor of the exchequer, he has paid over £800 to that judge, which were kept back as accruing during the time of the prosecution. I must answer another charge; for, gentlemen, I have been the most calumniated man in the world. I have been talked of as a convicted libeller in America. This is the very essence of stupid calumny. I was prosecuted for a libel on the Spanish minister. But for what? For his attempts to raise an insurrection in Canada; for his detected attempts to poison the minds of the soldiery in Quebec; for his scattering money through the country to detach the Canadians, the subjects of my natural king, from their allegiance. I attacked him, I exposed him. For this I was attacked in my turn, by a wicked judge. A wicked judge was found, who took upon him to hurt and harass me for doing what was only my duty.

* It is rather a singular circumstance, that Cobbett should have forgotten his conviction for a libel on Lord Hardwicke, in the same court, in which he was then speaking. We shall say more of this in another place.

That wicked judge brought a prosecution upon me ; seven special juries were struck, before they could find the one that would be fit for their purpose. I was subjected to the most galling oppression, yet I sustained it firmly. I lost, in this life of difficulty and struggle, the little property that I had acquired through difficulties of no common order. I finally left the country, and left it because I could serve the cause of my lawful king no longer. And yet this, this was what an attorney general *ripped up* against me, and blazoned me out as a convicted libeller in America as well as in Europe.

"The posted papers, to which I have already alluded, dare to speak of me as an oppressor of the poor, and as converting the property and influence which I may have acquired, into the means of disturbing the country, in which I have settled. But this is weak and unworthy ; the whole charge is false. It does not become any man to speak in high terms of himself ; but I have been no oppressor, no defrauder of the rights of any human being, no insulter of the poor. I have done good according to my measure. I have not been indolent in promoting the industry, the interests and peace of Hampshire. I am frequently consulted on matters relating to the county, and I never refuse advice or assistance. I must give one instance some time since. The general commanding the district, wished to have a road made throughout a particular part of the county. His aide-de-camp was sent amongst the gentlemen of Hampshire, to make inquiries, and get whatever assistance he could for the work. They all directed him to me. I was not suspected of disloyalty. I gave my assistance, and it was effectual. The road was laid out. I spent a considerable part of the winter in town, attending the progress of the bill through parliament, and the road is now in a state of great forwardness.

"Having now, as I trust, removed from your minds any unfavourable impressions, which such calumnies must naturally produce, I am now to consider the matter upon which I am charged. I am charged, and the whole criminality of the charge rests in this, with having written this paper with an

intention hostile to the king, and subversive of his government, or in other words, with meaning to do some injury to the country. If you find me guilty of the charge, you must find me guilty in manner and form as alleged against me. The wicked intention is necessary to constitute the crime I am accused of, and it is upon this point alone, that the whole merits of the case depend. The Attorney General has told you most erroneously, that I availed myself of the circumstance of living in the country, to put off the trial, or in other words, to evade justice. In this statement, Mr. Attorney General has been greatly in error, my attorneys, who are here present, know that this is not the fact; but that, on the contrary, I came to town, at considerable inconvenience to myself, and waited for my trial, but it was not brought on. I was quite ready for my trial before, and it would have been more convenient for me, that it had been brought on at once and disposed of. The circumstance of the delay did certainly require some explanation from the Attorney General, but that explanation is not to be found from the circumstance of my living in the country. It was certainly a very unpleasant thing to me, to be proclaimed throughout the country, as a criminal, over whom a prosecution was depending. To a man like me, who has a large family, with some children just old enough to be alarmed, and a wife, in a situation, in which alarms are often dangerous, it was most particularly unpleasant to have this prosecution long hanging over my head, like a sword suspended by a single thread. My prosecutors got an order for me to come up to town to be tried, and when I came up for that purpose, I was told to go back again about my business.

“The Attorney General has made great use of the word *loyal*, which he says I am in the habit of using as a term of reproach. Now, my own property, and all my interests and prospects are so connected with the security of the country, that it would be strange indeed if I were to use the word *loyalty* as a term of reproach. If any of you gentlemen are in the habit of reading my paper, you must know that I

do not mean to consider loyalty as a subject of reproach. The Attorney General must know it, and does know it. Every man of common understanding, that reads the article, will see that the word *loyal* is used in an ironical sense. Every one knows that there are a set of men, who wish to claim an exclusive loyalty. Such men, for example, as John Bowles, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Villiers, and others of that description, who pretend to an extraordinary degree of loyalty, and who endeavour to cry down, as disloyal and disaffected men, all who will venture to say any thing tending to remove the present administration from their places. It was to those pretended loyalists that I applied the term, and the Attorney General must know my meaning well enough. When in another part of the paper, I say, 'flog them, flog them,' then he finds out that I am speaking ironically, but in the other expression, he wishes it to be supposed that I was in downright earnest. Now it is not fair in him to pick and choose in this manner. He should either have considered both these expressions as serious, or both as ironical. I really, gentlemen, do not want to impress you with the belief, that I meant any thing else by the words I used, than what I really did mean. I meant to apply the term loyal in an ironical sense, to those hypocrites and flatterers, who pretend to be loyal, but who are really the greatest enemies of the country. There is another term, that he takes notice of, 'the king's friends.' This is a phrase, which every body, who has either read my paper, or any other paper that is published, must understand. It is not applied to those who really are the best friends to the king and country, but to that party, who choose to call themselves exclusively the king's friends, and would represent all other men as his enemies. Neither the term 'king's friends' nor loyal, can ever be used as a term of reproach, except when applied ironically to those hypocrites and flatterers, who claim exclusive loyalty and attachment to the king's person. In this paper, which I am charged with as being a libel, I have not mentioned the king's name, nor that of any of his family, nor any thing respecting the royal authority. This

article, which was satirical, hyperbolic, and perhaps clumsily and badly written, (certainly written in a great hurry,) did not reflect upon his majesty, but upon his ministers. Ministers, however, have a way of construing every attack upon them, as an attack upon the king. When I say, 'well done, Lord Castlereagh,' his lordship would say, this is not meant for me, but for the king. Lord Castlereagh would certainly never admit that any thing which spoke of cruelty, or flogging, could be meant for him; they might as well say, if a minister were walking through the streets and had mud thrown at him, that it was the king himself who was pelted. I certainly did not invent or devise those facts upon which I commented; and if, upon those facts, my comment was somewhat angry and hasty, it cannot be inferred from thence, that it was my intention to overturn the government, or do any injury to my country. The learned Judge Blackstone, from whom every lawyer in the court, and even the learned judge himself, who is now presiding on the bench, had imbibed their first lessons of law, in speaking of the forms of trial, states, that the trial of information, *ex officio*, was only to be used in cases of such enormity, that the least delay would endanger his majesty's government, or where his majesty was molested or affronted in the exercise of his royal functions. In all other cases, the subject is entitled to the double shield of a grand jury, as well as a petty jury. Did this paper endanger his majesty's government? Was this a case which would not bear a moment's delay? or if it were so, why was it delayed for a whole twelvemonth? If instead of calling me a person disaffected to his majesty, they had said, that I disliked Lord Castlereagh, and that I had intended and devised to bring Lord Castlereagh into dislike; I would not have known what defence to have made to such a charge, and I believe I must have admitted it to be true. It was but a short time ago, that this Lord Castlereagh complained in the house, of the difficulty of bringing libellers to punishment.

Lord Ellenborough.—I must interrupt you, you must

not make your defence a means of traduction; the particular crime that you are charged with, of publishing the paper, which has been read, cannot be defended by charging other men with doctrines delivered in Parliament.

Mr. Cobbett.—I shall return then to the forced construction, which I say the Attorney General has put upon my words. In that paper I was ridiculing the measure of the local militia, introduced by Lord Castlereagh. When I set down ‘aye, the rascals, flog them, flog them;’ no man could suppose that I was speaking seriously. The Attorney General says, I mean to say, that Buonaparte behaved with less cruelty to his conscripts, than our government behaves to the local militia; now my meaning in referring to Buonaparte on this occasion, was merely to sting them with this observation, that it would not be prudent for them to be always inveighing against the cruelty of Buonaparte, unless they would themselves leave off such practices as these. As to making some observation upon the treatment of soldiers, I will now ask, are we never to be allowed upon any occasion, to say that soldiers have been cruelly treated? If one of us was in a garrison town, and saw a soldier flogged to death, which I hope will never occur since the case of General Wall, would it be criminal to say any thing, or to write any thing upon the subject? What! is every man who puts on a red coat, to be from that moment deserted by all the world, and is no tongue, no pen, ever to stir in his defence? Who were those local militia men? The greater part were then young men, probably in smock frocks, just taken from the plough, and ignorant of that subordination, that is practised in the army. I allow, that against a serious mutiny, severe measures may be necessary, but then by mutiny I understand taking up arms, and forcibly and violently resisting the officers in the execution of their military duties. I do not think a mere discontent and a squabble in a corps, about the marching guinea, should either receive the name or punishment of mutiny. I and other people told Lord Castlereagh, from the beginning, that it would come to this, that these local militia

would be made just soldiers enough to be disinclined to return to labour, and that they would be so much of labourers as never to be made effective soldiers. But it is not always conceived criminal to speak of our soldiers having received cruel treatment. I shall now read to you many extracts of speeches delivered in Parliament, respecting the treatment of the British army in Walcheren. The sentiments which I shall now read to you, are much stronger than any thing contained in the paper for which I am prosecuted. I shall first read the words of Lord Grenville.

Lord Ellenborough.—I must prevent this, I cannot allow speeches stated to have been spoken in Parliament on other matters, to be read to the jury. If you have any extracts from other sources, which you think applicable to your case, you may read them.

Mr. Cobbett.—Well then, it will suffice for me to say shortly, that there is no degree of cruelty, hardship and oppression, which has not been charged to those who conducted the Walcheren expedition. When people speak against the ill-treatment of our soldiers, the fair and natural presumption is, not that they want to overturn the government, but that they want those evils of which they complain to be remedied in future. When Mr. Whitbread said a few days ago, that there prevailed as much cruelty in the Duke of Cumberland's regiment as there ever did, and that it was in that regiment only, that the practice of picketting was continued, did any body believe that Mr. Whitbread really meant to excite a mutiny? No, every body must be convinced that the thing was mentioned only, that the evil might be corrected.

The Attorney General, complained to his lordship of the impropriety of thus quoting speeches made in Parliament.

Lord Ellenborough again informed Mr. Cobbett, that it was improper to quote speeches made in the imperial chambers of Parliament.

Mr. Cobbett continued.—“It appeared to me that the reasonable conclusion, which is formed in other cases, and which also ought to be formed in mine, is, that a person gene-

rally complains, not with a view of doing an injury to his country by the complaint, but with the view of having that altered of which he complains. A man may be mistaken in the subject of which he complains, and yet may act without any of those bad intentions, which have been imputed to me. There is indeed a circumstance respecting my paper, which shows that it could not have been my intention to produce any mutiny. My paper cannot get amongst the soldiers, but by mere accident. Its circulation is principally amongst those classes, who are best informed, and most capable of understanding its real object and meaning. If one wanted to do mischief in the army, it is not by such papers as mine, but by placards and handbills that soldiers would be easiest worked upon.

“I do conceive, however, that there are cases in which much real mischief might be done by publications in newspapers. For example, if a fleet were on the point of sailing on a particular destination, and any body were to publish, that the transports were altogether deficient for the accommodation of the troops, and that there was no manner of attention to their comfort or their health, such publication might do considerable mischief, and, therefore, be deserving of punishment. In fact, such a publication had taken place in a morning paper, and it appeared to the last Attorney General (Sir A. Piggot,) as so very dangerous, that he filed an information *ex officio* upon it, and yet the present Attorney General did not conceive it in that light, and abandoned it. I think that the Attorney General acted rightly in abandoning this prosecution, but I think that, upon the same principle, he should also have given up the present prosecution. In the last trial for a libel, the Attorney General laid down very liberal doctrines. He said, that it was not his practice to prosecute men, for expressing their sentiments even with some degree of warmth and indiscretion in the discussion of public affairs; and that when such warmth was only displayed in arraigning the conduct of ministers, or in discussing what belonged to the important interests of the country, or the happiness of mankind, no

notice of this sort was ever taken of it. It is a thing perfectly well known, that in cases of this sort, words should be judged of by the intention, rather than by the literal construction. Lord Erskine expressed this in a striking manner, when he was pleading for a defendant in a case of this nature, in this very court, (at that time the trial of Hastings had been going on for a considerable length of time, and the court erected for the trial, obstructed the avenues of the Court of King's Bench.) 'What!' said Mr. Erskine, 'if when I am making my way through *dismal passages* to this hole in the wall, I should mutter to myself, and in an ill-humour, wish that the roof of the building would fall upon king, lords, and commons, upon prosecutors and defendants, such a wish might shew ill-temper; if I expressed it aloud, it would be indecorous, but if any one wished to take it up seriously, and complained of me to the House of Commons, how would the house take it up, or how would the person, who brought so frivolous a complaint, be treated?' I do not, however, pretend to say, that I was in such a passion at the time of my writing this article, as not to know what I was about, but still I say, that it was an article written in a hurry, and without much time for reflection. The article in the *Courier* was dated the 24th June, and the comment on it appeared in my paper on the 1st July. As it was necessary to send to and from Botley, in the interval, no great time was left for deliberation. If every expression was to be strained, as the Attorney General has attempted to strain the expressions in this article, no person could be safe. Half the language of mankind is figurative, and nothing can be more unfair, than construing according to the letter, which is meant as irony. Men in common conversation, often use expressions that are hyperbolical, and those expressions are never understood literally. If a different construction were to be put on every thing which appears in print, the press must either be wholly silent, or confine itself to the praises of administration.

"I perhaps should not have said any thing about the German troops, if it were not for the high eulogium that

the Attorney General has been pleased to bestow upon them. I am free to confess, that I was adverse to the employment of German troops in this country; and it did particularly move my indignation, that German troops should be brought to witness the punishment of the local militia men of this country, who, as I said before, were most of them young fellows, just taken from the plough, and unacquainted with the forms of military discipline. The introduction of foreign troops into this country, was always warmly objected to by our ancestors, and in their objection and dislike of them I perfectly agree. This objection then does not proceed from any jacobinical aversion for his majesty, but it is an objection, which has been justly entertained at all times by those, who had the best British feeling. So early as the year 1628, the House of Commons presented a petition to Charles I., in which they complained of bringing German horse into this country. The bringing in of strangers has been injurious to every country, but to England it has often been fatal. They held it to be far beneath the character, and the bold hearts of Englishmen, to think it necessary to bring over foreigners for their protection.

"There is another authentic instance of the dislike of our ancestors to the introduction of foreign troops. In the year 1692, very shortly after the revolution, there was a debate in the House of Commons, upon the introduction of foreigners, or their commanding Englishmen. Sir Peter Collier, in the course of his speech, said, 'that Englishmen bore a love to their own country, which it is impossible that strangers could feel. Foreigners could not have the same affection for this country, as the men, who had been born in it.' He concluded his speech, by moving that none but natives should command Englishmen.

"This motion although very much against the inclination of William the Third, who was naturally much attached to his foreign troops, was agreed to and became a law. Notwithstanding this, there are now no less than four or five German generals, commanding districts, or on the staff. Since the year

1806, this force has increased, from twenty-four to thirty-nine thousand men, including five thousand provincial troops in Nova Scotia, &c. There are four German lieutenant-generals, four major-generals, and nineteen colonels, many of whom have the rank of brigadier-general, and who commanded not only English men, but English officers. There are not only many Germans in high command in this country, but there are Frenchmen also. There is one Frenchman of the name of Montalembert, who is on the staff in Sussex, and I understand that there are, or there were two of them lately entrusted as overseers of a dock yard in Wales. Although the law says that no foreigner shall be employed in any office of trust, civil or military, yet the whole country is full of those foreigners, so employed in places of trust. The two acts which authorized the introduction of these German troops into this country, were not enacting statutes, but merely acts of indemnity. The law of the country was such as was agreed to, at the bargain made at the revolution by the Act of Settlement, and that act prohibited foreigners from holding those situations of trust. There are now no less than seven hundred and seventy-three of these German officers; and if we take in all the foreigners who hold offices of trust in our military service, contrary to the law, there are no less than one thousand five hundred and three.

“The Attorney General has mis-stated the fact, when he represents those German legions as entirely or principally composed of Hanoverians, who have enlisted from an attachment to their legitimate sovereign. It is a very small part indeed, not more than four or five thousand, who enlisted in Hanover; the great bulk of them is composed of persons, enlisted in the prisons of Spain and England. I have heard that a considerable number of them were enlisted from the prisoners of Dupont’s army. When an army of foreigners is raked together in this manner; when their officers command over Englishmen, and when part of them are brought to witness the flogging of our local militia men, how can I avoid feeling the greatest indignation, and feeling, as I must do, this

indignation, why should I not be permitted to express it! and if I do express this indignation which I feel, in somewhat of angry language, are you upon that account to presume that I am guilty of deliberately wishing and contriving to subvert the government of the country?

“The Attorney General talks of the gallant conduct of these troops at the battle of Talavera. Now, I have heard that they behaved very badly at the battle of Talavera, and if I had expected the Attorney General to make this assertion, I should certainly have brought in my pocket a letter, which I think will warrant one in saying, that they behaved badly there. The letter is from an officer in the horse artillery, Lieutenant Frederick Read, and directed to a person in a high situation in this country. Amongst other things it states, that if it was not for the timely arrival of the 29th regiment, their whole brigade would have been taken, in consequence of the cowardly conduct of the German Legion. It is not merely from this letter, that I derive my information on the subject, but I have spoken with many officers from Spain, who passed through my neighbourhood in the country, and whom I invited to take up their quarters at my house at Botley. All these officers agreed in stating, that the Germans had behaved very ill. One of their officers, indeed, planted the standard close to the enemy, and endeavoured to rally them, but it was impossible. The Attorney General must have been much misled, when he made this statement, and indeed I do not wonder at it, when I recollect that, since leaving Portugal, the officers have not been allowed to write, or even to speak about what takes place in that part of the world. The Attorney General appeals to the testimony of all in whose neighbourhood these Germans have been quartered, to say what well-conducted troops they are. Now, as to what I know of them, their character is directly the reverse. I shall first speak of the regiment commanded by the Duke of Brunswick, and in giving their character, I shall first state what was the opinion of the Arch-Duke Charles, respecting the regiment. The Archduke, in a letter to the Duke of Bruns-

wick, states, 'It is with great concern that I learn, that the troops under the command of your Highness in Saxony, have been guilty of such extortions and excesses as to dishonour the army, rendered forgotten all the atrocities committed by the French, and dispose the minds of the people against the common cause. I have therefore given orders to General Kicamager commanding in Saxony, to see that the most rigorous military discipline be enforced, as long as a corps continues there, which, like that under your command, is composed of people, *having no country*.' Such is the character that the regiment of the Duke of Brunswick held in Germany.

"When they came to this country, one of the first places they were sent to, was the Isle of Wight. There they committed all manner of violence, enormities and devastation. They were charged with committing two murders. I cannot pretend to say they actually did commit them, but this I will say, I have seen a letter stating that the bar of a public house had been chopped through with their sabres, and the landlord put into the greatest danger of his life, for not supplying them with liquor. In short, they were the terror of the whole neighbourhood, who rejoiced most sincerely, when they were sent off somewhere else. Nevertheless, I do not pretend to deny, that many of them may be very good men; but yet I have an objection to their being employed in this country, on the ground that our ancestors objected, that they never can participate in the feelings of Englishmen. Their attachments lie not to England, but to Germany. It is impossible, from the feelings of human nature, that it should be otherwise. The graves of their fathers, and their properties, if they have any, lie in Germany, and there, are their affections also. This is a principle of human nature too strong to be eradicated. If you take a Laplander from his own country, and bring him here, he will still suppose that there is something in Lapland, superior to any thing he sees elsewhere. When Germany shall be completely under the dominion of Buonaparte, if he should ever invade this country, is it German troops that are fit to be sent forward to oppose his

armies ? I believe, in my conscience, that it would be highly dangerous to trust them in such a situation. I believe, that the mass of foreign troops, which ministers are collecting in this country, will rather serve as the vanguard of Buonaparte's armies ; that it will be like the Trojan horse, only filled with Germans instead of Greeks.

“ Another instance of the value of these troops was recently displayed at Guadaloupe. A part of the 60th regiment, who were mostly Germans, ran away from the enemy. The depôt of this regiment was established at Lymington, in Hampshire, and they kept the whole neighbourhood in terror and alarm. I certainly have had my eye constantly on these German troops, since their first introduction into the country, and I am convinced that the employment of them is most injurious to the true interests of this country. I will allow, that my indignation was much excited at their being employed, as I thought, indecently, in witnessing, if not assisting in the flogging of Englishmen. In my hasty observations on this subject, there may have been much bad taste, and many things which cannot bear the test of literary criticism, but I trust you will believe there was no bad meaning. My property, the profits of my publications, the very trees of my planting, all depend upon the security of the country, under the government of his majesty and his successors ; and I must be the greatest beast and fool, as well as knave and traitor, if I could seriously and deliberately intend the subversion of the government, or to do any injury to the country. I have now nothing more to say, than to thank you, gentlemen of the Jury, and you my lord, for the attention with which you have been good enough to favour me.”

The Attorney General immediately rose to reply. He began—I cannot help thinking, that the present defendant would better have consulted his own fame, and the character, which he has, in order to answer this day's purpose, placed so high, if he had followed the example of his own printer and publisher, and admitted the libel of which he stands accused—

made no defence, and suffered judgment to have gone against him by default, rather than have resorted to such a defence, as he has this day made; for he has only made it the occasion for uttering new slanders against innocent and undefended persons, to whom he has thought proper incidentally to allude. It has pleased the defendant to complain loudly of delay in bringing the present information to trial. He has stated, that the libel was published on the 1st July 1809, and he asks, Why was I not called upon to answer for it at an earlier period? And why am I at length, when I supposed the prosecution was deserted, brought up in 1810, to answer for an offence committed in July 1809? I will tell you why, and I will tell you truly, because by the course of this court, I could not bring the defendant to trial sooner, he might have enabled me to have done so, but he would not do it. His lordship on the bench, will tell you, that a person living in the country, is entitled to fourteen days notice of trial; that a defendant is entitled to an imparlance, which will give him a whole term's delay, and the defendant actually had this; and that a defendant cannot be made to plead without three rules, the last of which only is peremptory. Now, if the defendant had pleaded to the first rule, notice of trial could have been given him for the sittings after last Hilary Term, but he did not plead till the third, and the sittings coming on the 13th of the month, and he not pleading till the 1st, fourteen days notice could not have been given him. If he had lived in town, ten days notice would have been enough, and the trial might have come on; but he lived in the country, and, therefore, it was, that I said he had had the benefit of his living in the country in the present delay, of which he now dares to complain; though I flatter myself I have shown, that he himself was the cause of it. He stated as a fact, and I beseech you to hold it in your remembrance, as a standard of his credibility, that he was brought up to London, and was told when he came there, "I won't try you now, go back again, and come another time." He said, that thus he was treated, and for this assertion there is no more foundation,

than for any invention which might spring from the wildest imagination of the wildest person. I am sorry to say, that it is a dry, cold invention, made only for the purpose of serving this trial; I would not speak so positively, but of what I have stated, I am certain from my own knowledge. The defendant has urged as a reason, why he should not be prosecuted for this libel, that there have been others which were worse, and which were either not prosecuted at all, or the prosecutions of which were abandoned; *fecerunt alii et multi et pejores*. It is true, there was such a libel in the Morning Post, as that to which the defendant has alluded; it is true, that for that libel a prosecution was instituted by my learned and most honourable predecessor, Sir Arthur Piggot, and it is true that that prosecution was not further carried on, but not for the reason assigned by the defendant. I speak in the hearing of the learned counsel for the Admiralty, to whose care, prosecutions of the same nature as that of the Morning Post are entrusted, and whose opinion upon that prosecution, jointly with mine, is now before me. There is no comparison in the degrees of wickedness, between the printer of a libel and the author of it; and though it is sometimes found necessary, by prosecuting the circulators of a libel, to deter printers and publishers from the offence, yet there is no occasion in which, wherever the author can be got at, he is not preferred by the law advisers of the crown. The other defendants in the present information, who have suffered judgment to go by default, are innocent when compared with Mr. Cobbett. The printer of the Morning Post gave up the name of the author of the libel, and that name is now before me; but the prosecution against him has not been proceeded with, because he is not in England. It waits, however, for his return, when he certainly will be prosecuted; and I agree with the defendant, that the libel was most malicious, and if it can be proved against him, as I flatter myself I have means to do it, the court of King's Bench will no doubt punish him with severity. So much for the argument, that the prosecutions

against others for worse libels than that of the present defendant have been dropped ; they are only suspended.

The defendant, for the purpose of removing all prejudices against him, has favoured us with an account of himself, in which he says, that no man was ever so much abused and calumniated as he has been. I am not sure that he makes a very accurate distinction between the active and the passive voice. Mr. Cobbett—the most calumniated—the most libelled man in the whole world. I am not a constant reader of Mr. Cobbett's works, much of them is doubtless unknown to me, but I have certainly seen enough of them to be able to pronounce him not the most calumniated man in the world. Indeed it has not fallen in my way to meet with many publications, which so little prove their author to be a man more sinned against than sinning; and after what I have seen, I certainly cannot subscribe to his assertion in this particular. The defendant has certainly bestowed no inconsiderable praise on himself, for the purpose of repelling the abuse of others, and I readily admit it to be generally true, as far as you believe it. There was a part of the defendant's life, when his publications justified the character of loyalty, which he has to-day put upon himself, but he must borrow from those publications, and not from the present, to prove it. I should not have touched upon this point, but he refers himself personally to me, and says that I know him to be a loyal man. I am obliged to say that I am not possessed of any such knowledge. I am bound to say, that from any means in my power, I have no such knowledge as he ascribes to me. Having repelled all former calumny against him, the defendant admits that the article in question is written in bad taste, he wrote it in a hurry ; he knew what he was writing, but as to any wish to excite disaffection in the minds of his majesty's subjects, is perfectly ridiculous. It is true, he says, I think with certain persons in the reign of Charles I. that foreign troops ought not to be received into England, and he reads a passage from some publication, protesting against the intro-

duction of such troops. I don't quarrel with this opinion of the defendant; if he thinks that foreign troops ought not to be received into the English service, let him indulge that notion; it is of no consequence to any one else, what his opinion is. But is this all? Has he only set himself up as wiser than the legislature? He states, that the acts of that legislature were merely acts of indemnity, but the contrary is the case. There were acts of indemnity for past offences which it would be difficult to find out, and authorizing his majesty to raise by the first act 10,000, and by the second act 16,000 foreign troops. The numbers of the German Legion are 12,000, and there are fewer than 1000 of them *now* in this country. The defendant, in defending himself, little adverted to the matter of the libel; he stated his conduct and life generally, and said that the libel was merely a mode of pointing out his disapprobation of Lord Castlereagh's plan of Local Militia. Is there any one word of discussion in the whole paper? Is there any examination of the wisdom or propriety of the measure? Does he suggest any other, which may have been more prudently adopted? Does he think there was any other, or that this was not the true course, when our country was threatened with invasion, than to give the people a habit of arms before the danger falls, or rather would he not have discountenanced every other method of training the people? He does, indeed, generally say, "This is what I always said would be the consequence." When this measure was the law of the land, when a mutiny had taken place, when the mutineers had been tried by a regular court martial, when five of the ringleaders had been sentenced to a punishment, which had been partly inflicted, when the whole disturbance was over, the defendant endeavours to light the flame again, by holding the mutineers out to disgrace for submitting to their just punishment, and the German Legion to odium, for being employed upon the necessary service of quelling this mutiny, and to insinuate that the soldiers of our army were driven into it by means more tyrannical than the conscriptions of Buonaparte. This was

the object of the libel, and however the defendant may endeavour to call your attention from the real question by a history of his life, his lordship will tell you that the question you have to consider, is, whether the object of this paper is that of fair, candid inquiry, or that of exciting discontent in the minds of those whom it may concern. I shall just draw your attention to a few passages in the libel, and then I am sure you will have a persuasion which nothing can shake, that the objects of the libel are such as I have represented them to be. As to the expression, "they deserve it," is it not plainly ironical, and intended to reproach and taunt the men on account of their punishment? Is it not the language of insult? Does he not mean to *nose* them for having been so dastardly as to submit to the German Legion? I say, too, that the defendant plainly meant to reproach the people of Ely for not siding with the mutineers, in that passage where he says, "I do not know what kind of place Ely is, &c." No man imputes want of sense or apprehension to Mr. Cobbett, and can any man similarly blessed, doubt that this passage was intended as a reproach to the witnesses of the scene; and what was the scene? Why, those men whose duty it was to obey, offered their officers, for obedience, resistance; surrounding and besetting them, for what they thought was their arrear of wages. To quell this mutiny a force was procured from a neighbouring town. The mutineers were brought to a court martial; the ringleaders were sentenced to a punishment, the whole of which was not inflicted. And this Mr. Cobbett called only a little mutiny amongst the men, and only for a mere mutiny against officers, probably their equals, they were condemned to suffer this punishment; and the indignation against the German Legion for inflicting it, led Mr. Cobbett into the libel in question. The German Legion were not sent for to inflict the punishment, but while the mutiny lasted, they were sent for to suppress that spirit—a very necessary service; and I cannot think him a good loyal subject, or one who understands the word loyal, who would write such a paper as this, in order to

expose the German Legion to the indignation of the people, as foreigners. This was a little mutiny——

The Attorney General was here told, that the defendant had called it mere disorderly conduct.

It was not, continued the Attorney General, even a mutiny then! only disorderly conduct. The paper from which Mr. Cobbett takes his motto, the *Courier*, truly states that there had been a mutiny. It would be wasting time further to show the object of this publication, but I must say one word by way of repelling the defendant's calumny against those brave, gallant and loyal persons, who compose the German Legion; there may have been some of them found to have occasionally misconducted themselves, but that their general conduct is such as has been described by the defendant, I have taken pains to inquire, and I utterly deny. Some of them may have been guilty of little excesses, and it is impossible to keep a large body of men free from them; but upon the whole, there never was a body of men, of whom there was so little to complain.* I have no doubt that every complaint against every individual of them, misconducting himself, finds its way to the commander in chief, and therefore this is an ascertainable fact. From all these complaints, which have found their way to Mr. Cobbett, no doubt a highly-finished picture of their misconduct might be drawn.

* We cannot refrain here from making a few remarks on this part of the Attorney General's speech. When he came into court, he must have been by necessity wholly ignorant of the exact line of defence, which Cobbett would chalk out for himself, and consequently, the Attorney General must have been ignorant of the charges, which Cobbett intended to institute against the German Legion. He, however, by way of rebutting the accusations of Cobbett, says, that he had taken pains to inquire into their conduct, and found it amply deserving of commendation. When and where, did the lawyer make this inquiry? did he possess the foreknowledge of the attack, which Cobbett intended to make against the German Legion,—and, therefore, by way of anticipation, instituted the alleged inquiry? It belongs not, however, to the character of a lawyer, to be very nice in regard to assertions, which, by virtue of his profession, he considers himself entitled to make; but the truth was on Cobbett's side, as every one can substantiate, who had ever the misfortune to reside in the place, where the German mercenaries were quartered.

These, however, will be only particular cases; their general conduct, however, is such as I have described. It has been stated to the defendant by a particular individual, whom he named, that they were guilty of cowardice at Talavera, I confess the assertion surprised me, because I knew their conduct to be directly the contrary, and that out of four standards, that were taken, three were so taken by the German Legion. This must have been rather an extraordinary effect of cowardice, or else it must have been strange, that they who had taken three standards, should betray cowardice in fight. I cannot hear such calumny of absent brave foreigners, and not refute it, and this I do in justice to them, not that the cause requires it; for the question for your consideration is not, whether the German Legion be brave, or not, but that they being in the service of his majesty, whether one object of this paper be not to revile them for inflicting discipline upon his majesty's native troops, and I sit down without the smallest doubt, that you will be of opinion that the libel has that tendency.

Lord Ellenborough then charged the jury, to the following effect. You have been assembled and are sworn to try an Information filed by his majesty's Attorney General, against William Cobbett, charging him with being the author of a libel, intended to injure the king's military service, and to represent that certain soldiers in the local militia were treated with oppression. This is the substance of the charge and mischief, and the question is, whether the mischief be justly ascribable to the libel in question, and whether it be of that noxious tendency. The defendant has said in the course of his defence, that he has been the subject of much calumny. Whether he has been so or no, I know not, but I am quite sure you will divest your minds of every prejudice against the defendant, on account of either his actual or supposed conduct, and consider him only upon the demerit imputed to him by this publication. The publication took its rise in a passage of the Courier, which the defendant took for his motto.

Lord Ellenborough here read the passage.

It appears by this, that the soldiers had actually been tried by a court-martial for mutiny, but the defendant has stated this to have amounted in his conception, merely to a squabble between officers and soldiers about a marching guinea; but how this can be construed to be other than a mutiny, and that of the most dangerous sort, exceeds my comprehension.

Lord Ellenborough then read the libel as far as the words "It really was not without reason, that you dwelt with so much earnestness upon the great utility of the foreign troops, whom Mr. Wardle appeared to think of no utility at all."

Although the introduction of foreign troops is certainly sanctioned by law, yet every individual has a right to suggest an alteration in that law, provided that suggestion be made in temperate and qualified terms; he may address himself to the sober reason of his country, that mischief will result from present measures, and endeavour, through the people, to impress the parliament with the necessity of their being changed. I am sure that if such a discussion had been brought before a jury, you would have been no more inclined to construe it, than any judge in the situation which I *unworthily* fill, would be to recommend you so to construe it, a libel. But, gentlemen, it is for you to consider whether this publication has a bad intention, and intention is principally to be looked at by a fair consideration of terms. If intention be to be judged otherwise, a defendant would have nothing to do upon all occasions, but to say, my mind was innocent, but my pen slipped, the libel was unguarded, acquit me. But this is not one random expression, there is a continuity of the same thought, and can you infer from it any purpose but one? The libel proceeds:

Lord Ellenborough read "Poor gentleman! he little imagined how great a genius might find employment for such troops. Let Mr. Wardle look at my motto, and then say whether the German soldiers are of no use." The "employment," here talked of, must have been that of chastising the

Lord Ellenborough then read from the words, "this occurrence," to the end.

If this passage allude to any publication on the nature of the French government, there is only one, who has come under my view, by an American of some distinction, as a writer, but Mr. Cobbett himself explains his allusion to have been to Mr. Bowles, Mr. Villiers, and Mr. Hunt. They may or they may not have cast these imputations on Buonaparte; the words apply to those persons, whoever they are. But the object of this paragraph is, to say to the English people, "You have not a right to complain of Buonaparte; look at home." This is the scope of the publication, and was not its tendency to injure the military service? It is for you to say, whether these be words escaped in haste from a man, otherwise writing temperately, but whose zeal over-shot his discretion, or whether they are the words of a man, who wished to dissolve the union of the military, upon which, at all times, but now especially at this time, the safety of the kingdom depends. If this latter be the case, surely the defendant will meritedly fall under the character of that seditious person, which the information charges him with being. In cases like the present, the law requires me to state my opinion to the jury, and where I have held a different opinion I have of the present case, I have not with-

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On Thursday the fifth of July, Mr. Cobbett was brought up to receive judgment, when he was committed to the King's Bench prison, to be brought up again on the 9th.

On this occasion Mr. Cobbett was attended by many of his friends, in full expectation that the sentence would be pronounced on that day. The court was crowded to suffocation, and as soon as the bustle had subsided, the Attorney General moved the judgment of the court on William Cobbett, Messrs. Bagshaw and Budd, and Mr. Hansard, the printer of the Political Register.

Lord Ellenborough recapitulated the evidence, and at the conclusion he inquired whether the defendants had any affidavits to produce.

Mr. Cobbett replied, that he did not intend to offer any to the court.

Affidavits having been read on the part of Messrs. Bagshaw and Budd, and Mr. Hansard, Lord Ellenborough inquired, whether the defendants had any counsel.

Mr. Cobbett replied—My Lord, after what has been already said upon the subject, I have nothing *at present* to trouble your lordship with, except to say, that the defendants had no share whatever in the composition of the Register, and I believe no opportunity of looking over it before publication. In this I except Mr. Hansard, the printer; but I here declare that in my whole intercourse with them, I cannot recollect ever having heard a disloyal sentiment from the lips of one of them. I need not now repeat, that the paragraph which has been the foundation of the charge, was not written by me with any evil or libellous intention.

The Attorney General.—I think the defendant let drop the word *present*, which seems to imply a future address, but your lordship will inform him that what he has to say, he must say now.

Lord Ellenborough then addressed Mr. Cobbett, and desired him to speak at the present time, whatever he might have to urge before the court.

Mr. Cobbett replied, that he was aware of that, but after what had been already said, he did not intend to trouble the court with any further observations.

The Attorney General now rose to speak in praying the judgment of the court, but to follow him through the whole of it, would merely be to recapitulate the principal subjects on which he dwelt at the trial; at the close, he said—My lord, the Army, insulted by this libel, calls on you for justice. The Government, which, however it may be formed, must look to public esteem for any power of public good, and whose authority to be useful, must be conformable to the laws. The People, terrified, disgusted, and indignant at the calumnies by which this libeller would shake all the foundations of national security, call on you for justice.

I leave the case to you: I know that justice administered by you will be tempered with mercy, but your lordship will not forget, that if there be a mercy due to the individual, there is a more solemn and important mercy due to the nation.

Lord Ellenborough.—Let the four defendants be brought up for judgment on Monday next.

The remarks which Mr. Cobbett makes on the speech of the Attorney General, are both curious and interesting, and particularly in the latter sense, as we thereby obtain some glimpses of his private character, which, on other occasions, he appears desirous to conceal.

"There are," he says, "three assertions made by the Attorney General, during this memorable speech, which assertions materially affect me; and upon which, therefore, I may be allowed to make a few observations. The first of these assertions is, that I made my defence a vehicle for other calumnies and slanders, almost as bad as the original libel. The second, that I wrote the publication in question, and generally every thing I wrote, for base lucre. And then in another part of his speech, where he is stating the evil consequences, which, in the way of example, will arise from a slight punishment of me; he asks, if other libellers will not,

in such a case, be entitled to say, 'If I, by libelling, be enabled to make a fortune, and to amass wealth, when in return I shall only have to sustain so slight a punishment as that passed on Mr. Cobbett, will I not cheerfully incur the penalty?'

"The third assertion is, that the Army called upon the court to punish me. The words are these as given in the report. 'The *Army*, against whom this libel is in a peculiar manner directed, calls on the court for justice against its *trader*.'

"With respect to the first, namely, that I made my defence a vehicle for other calumnies and slanders; much more need not to be said, than was said by every one who heard or read the speech, and that is, that it is very strange that these new calumnies were not named by the person, who was speaking, in aggravation. He had had nearly a month to consider of, and inquire into the *facts*, for I dealt not in *insinuations*, stated by me in my defence, and how comes it, that he did not *contradict* any of those facts? How came he to content himself with a general assertion, unsupported with even an alleged fact. Had he not *time* to go more minutely into the matter; or did he, out of mercy, forbear to prove these new calumnies upon me? Was it compassion, that operated with him upon this occasion? These 'calumnies,' as he calls them, were brought forth in answer to, and in contradiction of assertions made by him in his first speech. It is therefore very surprising, that he should not have made an attempt, at least, to refute them. He seems to have been very anxious to *put every thing right* in the public mind; and how comes he then to have left these calumnies totally unanswered, especially when he looked upon them as being almost as bad as the original libel?

"Upon the second assertion, that I had written the publication in question, for gain's sake; that I had amassed wealth, made a *fortune* by libelling, and that I had, in short, in my writings been actuated by a craving after *base lucre*; upon this, the first observation to make, is, that it pays a

beautiful compliment to the people of this country, and comes in with a peculiar fitness close after the assertions, that their *good sense* prevented the mischiefs, which the publication was calculated to excite, and that even *they* called upon the court to punish me. No, the people of this country were so sensible, so discerning, so loyal, and held libelling in such abhorrence, that they were not to be excited to sedition by me, and in a minute afterwards to publish libels, is, in this country, the way to *make a fortune*. The *Army*, too, abhorred this work of libelling, and even called upon the court to punish me for it, and yet, but only a minute before, there was great danger of my creating disaffection in the *Army*; of throwing every thing into confusion, and of producing the destruction 'of social order and our holy religion,' as John Bowles has it. The Attorney General was in a difficulty. It would not do to say, that my writing had no effect upon either the People or the *Army*; it would not do to say, that what I wrote, dropped deadborn from the press, or that it made no impression upon any body; it would not do to say this, and yet it was paying me too great a compliment, to suppose that I had the power of inducing any body to think or feel with me, therefore I was, in one and the same speech, represented as a most *mischievous* and a most *insignificant* writer.

"But to return to the charge of writing for base lucre. I think the public will have perceived, that there was nothing original in this part of the Attorney General's speech; for the charge had, in all forms of words, been long before made by the basest of my calumniators, by the vile wretches, who *notoriously* use their pen and their pencils for pay, and who do not, like me, look for remuneration to the *sale* of their works to the public. The idea of my having amassed wealth, arose, in the first place, perhaps, from the envy of the worst, and most despicable part of those, who wished to live by the press, but who did not possess the requisite talents to ensure success to their endeavours, and at the same time preserve their independence, or who were so deficient in point of in-

dustry, as to render their talents of no avail, and who, therefore, resorted to that species of traffic, which exposed them to my lash. Such men would naturally hate me ; such men would naturally wish for my destruction. Such men would naturally stick at no falsehood, at no sort or size of calumny against a man, whose success was at once an object of their envy, and the means of their continual annoyance. But from a person in the situation of Attorney General, one might have expected a little more caution in speaking of the character and motives of any man.

“ Let me, before I come to my particular case, first ask why the gains of a writer, or of a book, or newspaper proprietor, are to be called *base lucre*, any more than the gains of any other description of persons. Milton, and Swift, and Addison received money for their works ; nay, Pope received more, perhaps, than all of them put together, and wrote too, with ten times more severity and more personality, than I ever did, and yet no one ever thought, I believe, of giving to his gains the name of *base lucre*. This is a most sweeping blow at the press. Let no one connected with it in any way whatever, imagine that his pecuniary possessions, or his estate, if he has gained one, will or can escape the application of this liberal charge. The fortunes of Mr. Walter, and Mr. Perry, and Mr. Stuart, and Mr. Longman, and Mr. Cadell, and of all the rest of them, are all to be considered as *base lucre*. *Base lucre* is the fruit of the industry and talents of every man who works with his pen ; and those, whose business it is to instruct and inform mankind, are either to be steeped in poverty, or to be regarded as sordid and *base* hunters after gain. Dr. Johnson, if now living, must at this rate be liable to be charged with hunting after *base lucre*, for he really lived by the use of his pen. Paley, also, sold his writings, and so, I dare say, did Locke ; and why not then impute baseness to them on this account ? It is notorious, that thousands of priests, and even bishops, have sold their writings, not excepting their sermons, and is not that hunting after ‘ *base lucre* ? ’ It is equally notorious, that lawyers are daily in

the habit of selling reports of cases, and other writings appertaining to their profession, and what can their gain thereby be called but 'base lucre?' Burke sold his writings, as well as Paine did his, nay, the former, for many years, and being a member of the honourable House all the while, actually wrote for pay in a periodical work, called the *Annual Register*, and of course, he sought therein after 'base lucre.' Base lucre, it was, according to this doctrine, that set Malone to edite Shakespeare, and that induced Mr. Tooke to write his diversions of Purley, and in short, every writer, whether upon law, physic, divinity, politics, ethics, or any thing else, if he sells the productions of his pen, is exposed to this new and hitherto unheard-of charge.

"There is indeed a species of gain, arising from the use of the pen, which does well merit the appellation of base lucre, but the 'learned friend,' seems to have mistaken the mark. When a man bargains for the price of maintaining such and such principles, or of endeavouring to make out such or such a case, without believing in the soundness of the principles, or the truth of the case, such a man, whether he touch the cash, or paper money, before or after the performance of his work, and whether he work with his tongue or his pen, may, I think, be pretty fairly charged with seeking after base lucre; for he, in such case, manifestly sells not only the use of his talents, but his sincerity into the bargain, and drives a traffic as nearly allied to soul selling, as any thing in this world can be, nor does it signify a straw from what quarter, or in what shape, the remuneration may come, for the motive being base, the gain or lucre must be also. Júdas Iscariot sold his Lord and Master for 'base lucre,' and there is scarcely a lawyer who does not sell his soul to the devil, every hour of his life, for 'base lucre,' except what he passes in sleep, which is the only time that the noxious creature can be said to be harmless. Again, if a man receive from the taxes, that is to say, from the people's money, a reward for writing any thing, especially upon controverted or political questions, the lucre accruing to him may fairly be said to be

base, for here, as in the former case, he makes a base bargain for the use of his talents. It is the same with those, who are mere proprietors of works, and not writers, and who vend their pages for a like consideration, coming from a like source. But if a man sell to the public, sell to any one that chooses to buy with his own money, and resort to no means of cheating the purchaser out of the price of what is sold, there can be nothing of baseness attached to his gains. The article is offered to the public, those who do not choose to purchase, let it alone; there is no compulsion, there is no monopoly in the way of purchasing elsewhere, and there is nothing of baseness belonging to the transaction; the gain is fair and honourable; it is the right of the possessor, and more perfectly his right, perhaps, than gain of any other sort can possibly be.

“ After these general observations, it is hardly necessary for me to say much upon my particular case, it being impossible that the reader should not have already distinctly perceived, that the charge of seeking after base lucre is *quite inapplicable to me*. But I cannot upon such an occasion refrain from stating some facts, calculated to show the injustice and falsehood of this charge, when preferred against me as proprietor of a public print. I have now been, either in America or England, sole proprietor of a public print for upwards of fourteen years, with the intermission of about a year of that time, and I never did, upon any occasion whatever, take money or money's worth for the insertion or suppression of any paragraph or article whatever, though it is well known, that the practice is as common as any other branch of the business belonging to newspapers in general. Many hundreds of pounds have been offered to me in this way, as my several clerks and agents can bear witness, and had I hankered after base lucre, the reader will readily believe, that I should have received all that was so offered. From the daily newspapers which I published after my return to England, I excluded all quack advertisements, because I looked upon them as indecent and having a mischiev-

ous tendency, and because inserting them appeared to me to be assisting imposition. These advertisements are, it is well known, a great source of profit to the proprietors of newspapers, and if I had been attached to base lucre, should I have rejected my share of that profit? I lost many hundreds of pounds by my daily newspaper, which failed, not for want of readers, but solely because I would not take money in the same way that other proprietors did. Whether this were wise or foolish is now of no consequence, but the fact is at any rate, quite sufficient to repel the charge of seeking after 'base lucre.'

"From my outset as a writer to the present hour, *I have always preferred principle to gain*. In America, the king's ministers made, and not at all improperly, offers of service to me on the part of the ministry at home. The offer was put as of service to any relations that I might have in England, and my answer was, that if I could earn any thing myself, wherewith to assist my relations, I should assist them, but that I would not be the cause of their receiving any thing out of the *public purse*. Mr. Liston, then our minister in America, can bear testimony to the truth of this statement. And was this the conduct of a man who sought after base lucre? Is this the conduct which is now fashionable amongst those who call themselves the loyal, and the king's friends? Do they reject offers of the public purse? Do they take care to keep their poor relations out of their own earnings or property, or do they throw them neck and heels upon the public, to be maintained out of the taxes, as a higher order of paupers? I have acted up to my professions. I have at this time dependant upon me for almost every thing, nearly *twenty children*, besides my own. I walk on foot, where others would ride in a coach, that I may have the means of yielding them support, that I may have the means of preventing every one belonging to me, from seeking support from the public in any shape whatever. Is this the fashion of the *loyal*? Do the *loyal* act thus? Do *they* make sacrifices in order that their poor relations may not become a

charge to the public? Let that public answer this question, and say to whom the charge of seeking after base lucre belongs?

"I wonder whether it has ever happened to the Attorney General to reject the offer of *two services of plate*, tendered to him for the exertion of *his* talents? This has happened to me, though the offer on each occasion was made in the most delicate manner, though the service had been already performed, though the thing was done with, and the offer could not have a prospective view, and though the service had been performed without any previous application. I wonder whether Sir Vicary Gibbs did ever reject an offer of this sort; and I do wonder how many there are amongst the whole tribe of 'learned friends,' who have or ever will have to accuse themselves of such an act. Yet has he the assurance to impute my writings to motives of base lucre. The truth is, that I am hated by the pretended loyal, because I am proof against all the temptations of base lucre. I have spoken of the offer made me while in America; upon my return home the ministers made me other offers, and amongst the rest they offered me a share of the True Briton newspaper, conducted and nominally owned by Mr. Herriot.* I, who was what the country people call a *greenhorn*(?) as to such matters, and who was gull enough to think that it was *principle* that actuated every writer, on what I then deemed the right side, *I was quite astonished to find that the TREASURY was able to offer me a share in a newspaper*. I rejected the offer *in the most delicate manner that I could*, but I was never forgiven; I have experienced, as might have been expected, every species of abuse from that time; but I did not,

* We do not mean to say exactly, that in this statement, Cobbett tells an untruth, but it is very much like it. Mr. Herriot was the bonafide proprietor of the True Briton newspaper, and so far from Cobbett being offered a share in it by government, they had it not to offer him. After the demolition of Cobbett's house, on the occasion of the illumination for peace, he sold the Porcupine newspaper to Mr. Herriot, and it became merged in the True Briton, under the title of the TRUE BRITON and PORCUPINE.

I must confess, expect ever to be accused of writing for base lucre. This is a charge, which, as I showed upon the trial, originated with the very scum of the press, and had its foundation in the worst and most villanous of passions.

"In general it is a topic of exultation, that industry and talent are rewarded with the possession of wealth. The great object of the teachers of youth in this country, seems always to have been the instilling into their minds, that wealth was the sure reward of industry and ability. Upon what ground is it then, the amassing of wealth, the making of a fortune, by the use of industry and talents, is to be considered as meriting reproach in me? The fact is not true. I have not amassed wealth, and have not made a fortune in any fair sense of those phrases. I do not possess a quarter part as much as I should, in all probability, have gained by the use of the same degree of industry and talent in trade or commerce. But if the fact were otherwise, and if I rode in a coach and four, instead of keeping one pleasure horse, and that one only, because it is thought necessary to the health of my wife; if I had really a fortune worthy of being so called, what right would any one have to reproach me with the possession of it? I have been labouring seventeen years since I quitted the army. I have never known what it was to enjoy any of that, which the world calls pleasure. From a beginning with nothing, I have acquired the means of making some little provision for a family of six children, the remains of thirteen, besides having, for several years, maintained almost wholly, three times as many children of my relations; and am I to be reproached as a lover of base lucre, because I began to have a prospect, for it is nothing more, of making such provision? was it not manly and brave, for the Attorney General, when he knew that I should not be permitted to answer him, to make such an attack not only upon me, but upon the future comfort of those, who depend upon me for support. Verily this is not to be forgotten presently. As long as I or my children are able to remember, *this* will be borne in mind, and I have not the smallest doubt of seeing the day

when Sir Vicary Gibbs, and those, who belong to him, will not think of any such thing as that of reproaching us with the possession of our earnings.

“During the time I was absent from home, for the purpose of giving bail, as before stated, a man dressed like a gentleman, went upon my land in the neighbourhood of Botley, got into conversation with my servants, asked them how much property I had, where it lay, of whom I had purchased it, what I had given for it, whether I was upon the point of purchasing any more, and a great many other questions of the same sort. When he went away from one of them, he told them, ‘You will not have Cobbett here again for one while,’ or words to that effect. I leave the public to form their opinions as to the object of this visit, and of the person who made it. The truth of the fact can at any time be verified upon oath. If this scoundrel had been put to the test, I wonder what account *he* could have rendered of the source of his means; of the money which had purchased the clothes upon his back. Not long before the time just mentioned, another person, of a similar description, went to another man who works for me, asked him what sort of a man I was, *what he had ever heard me say about the king or the government*, and told him, *that some people thought me a very great enemy of the government*. The person went into a little public house, in the neighbourhood of my farm, where he got into conversation with those whom he found there, and contrived soon to make that conversation turn upon me. He heard nothing but good of me as a neighbour and master; and as to politics, not a soul that he talked to, knew what he meant, never in their lives having heard me utter a word upon any subject of that sort. Of the two servants, whom I have alluded to above, the name of the former is John Dean, and that of the latter James Cowherd, both of them men, on whose word I can rely, and who, as I said before, are ready to verify this statement upon their oaths. The modesty and good manners of my men, induced them to give answers to the questions of these base rascals, without suspecting any

ming of their real character or design ; nor had either of them the smallest notion of that design, until my return home, and until I had acquainted them with the nature of my situation. If the design, which must, I think, be manifest enough to the reader, had been known, their bones, or at least their skin, would, I am afraid, have carried off a testimonial of their baseness, and of the indignation of my servants. The base miscreants would then have had a feeling proof of the sentiments entertained towards me, by those who knew me best, and have had the greatest experience of my disposition. I leave the public to ruminate upon what I have here stated, relative to the inquiries of these villains. The miscreant, who went to make the inquiries about the extent of my property, did not, it seems, go to Botley, but appeared to go from, and to return to some town or village upon the Gosport road, fearing, apparently, to be known, or at least traced, if he put up at the inn at Botley.

“ One cannot, however, help observing, how very finely all these things agree with the notion, now, and occasionally heretofore endeavoured to be propagated, *that I am a person not worthy of notice*. This notion agrees admirably with all that the public has seen and heard of me for the last twelve-months, during which time there has been more written and printed against me individually, than would, if collected together, make twenty thick quarto volumes ; and melancholy to relate ! without producing the loss of one of my friends, the falling off of one of my readers, or the robbing me of one wink of my sleep, while my enemies, if, upon any occasion, they dare show themselves, became objects of public hatred and scorn ; and I solemnly declare, that I would rather commit the horrid and cowardly act of suicide, than change names and characters with the very best, or rather, the least bad of all those enemies, whether I look amongst the profligates or the hypocrites, amongst the daring robbers, or the sly and smooth cheaters.

“ My readers know, that besides the Political Register, I have undertaken, and am carrying on three other publica-

tions, namely, the PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY, the PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES, and the STATE TRIALS; and, under the present circumstances, I think it will not be deemed egotism, if I say something about them. These works, particularly the former and the latter, so far from being undertaken with the hope of merely *gaining money*, were undertaken with the certainty of sinking money, for some time at least, probably for many years, and possibly for ever.* They were works which, though absolutely necessary to the completing of our political libraries, none of the booksellers in London, though many of them are possessed of ten times my pecuniary means, would venture to undertake. After long waiting, *they promise profit*; but it must be evident to every man, at all acquainted with the matter, that base lucre could form no part of the object, with which they were undertaken. I have heard others applauded for their public spirit, in encountering what have been called great national works. What a clutter was made in this way, about large editions of Shakespeare and of Milton, which were at last got rid of by the means of a lottery, authorized by act of Parliament. The terms liberality and munificence were given to the undertakers of those works; but was there any thing in them of *national utility*, worthy of being compared with these works of mine? I have encountered these works, unaided by any body. I shall ask the honourable House for no lottery to carry them through. I trust solely to their really intrinsic merit for their success, and if they do succeed, shall I therefore be accused of seeking after base lucre? This work (*i. e.* the Political Register) of which I now begin the eighteenth volume, has had nothing to support

* Cobbett labours hard to persuade his readers, that the chief, the principal, the only object of his literary undertakings, had nothing to do with "gaining money." For what purpose then did he enter upon them? He was by far too shrewd and close a calculator, to enter upon any speculation, if it did not promise him an adequate profit; and to say that ultimate gain was not his object, in all and every one of his literary undertakings, carries with it its own contradiction.

it but its own merits. Not a pound, not even a pound in paper money, was ever expended upon advertising it. It came up like a grain of mustard seed, and like a grain of mustard seed, it has spread over the whole civilized world. And why has it spread more than other publications of the same kind? There have not been wanting imitations of it. There have been some dozens of them, I believe. Same size, same form, same type, same heads of matter, same title, all but the word expressing my name. How many efforts have been made to tempt the public away from me, while not one attempt has been made by me, to prevent it. Yet! all have failed. The changeling has been discovered, and the wretched adventurers have then endeavoured to wreak their vengeance on me. They have sworn that I wrote badly, that I publish nothing but trash, that I am both fool and knave. But still the readers hang on me. One would think, as Falstaff says, that I had given them love powder. No, but I have given them as great a rarity, and something full as attractive, namely *truth in clear language*. I have stripped statement and reasoning of the foppery of affectation, and amongst my other sins, is that of having shown, of having proved beyond all dispute, that very much of what is called *learning* is imposture, *quite useless to any man, whom God has blessed with brains*. The public, however much, in many cases, some of them dissent from my opinions, will never be persuaded that my views are inimical to my country, or have any dishonourable object. Nothing will ever persuade any man, be he who he may, sincerely to believe this. There are many who will pretend to believe it, but they will not believe it at bottom, and they will read on. The public has perceived in me, a sort of conduct towards my adversaries, which they never witnessed in any other public writer. They have seen that I always insert, and give publicity to whatever is sent in answer to myself. This is a proof of my love of truth, ten thousand times stronger than any professions, however strong. It is a speaking fact, which is always the thing to produce the most impression.

The Register has created in England, and even in other countries, a new taste in reading, and an entirely new set of notions on political matters; and can it be possible, that any one is to be persuaded that such an effect is to be produced by mere libelling? No, nor will any one believe, that it is to be produced by a mind bent upon base lucre. If base lucre had been my principal object, or indeed if it had been a considerable object with me, I never should have written with effect, because to write with effect, one's mind must be free, which it never can be, if the love of gain be uppermost. Besides, how inconsistent is this charge of base lucre, with the charge of seditious intentions? The two things are absolutely incompatible with one another, for, if insurrection and confusion were to take place, all the works formerly mentioned, all the numerous volumes of those works, whence my profits are to come, if they come at all, would at once cease to be of any more use than so many square bits of wood. For a man, who has real property, to wish for the annihilation of those laws, by which alone that property is secured to him, is not very likely; for a man like me, who is planting trees and sowing acorns, and making roads, and breaking up wastes, to wish for the destruction of order, and law, and property, is still less likely; but for a man, the chief part of whose property consists of what must of necessity become mere waste paper, in case of a destruction of order and law, for such a man, to wish for such destruction, is utterly out of belief, and quite impossible, if he be a seeker after 'base lucre.'

"It remains for me to notice the third assertion of the Attorney, General, namely that the Army called upon the court to punish me. The words as given in the report were these, 'the Army, against whom this libel is in a peculiar manner directed, CALLS ON THE COURT for justice against its traducers.'"

We cannot follow Cobbett through his long discursive refutation of this statement, but we shall merely confine ourselves to those passages which throw a light upon his character,

or possess any interest to the general reader. After having proved by a reference to several facts, that he has always been a staunch advocate of the soldier, he says,

"To the army, to every soldier in it, I have a bond of attachment quite independent of any political reasonings or considerations. I have been a soldier myself, and for no small number of years, at that time of life when the feelings are most ardent, and when the strongest attachments are formed. Once a soldier always a soldier, is a maxim, the truth of which I need not insist on, to any one who has ever served in the army for any length of time, and especially if the service he has seen, has embraced those scenes and occasions, where every man, first or last, from one cause or another, owes the preservation of his all, health and life not excepted, to the kindness, the generosity, the fellow-feeling of his comrades. A communion of monks hate one another, because they are compelled to live together, and do not stand in need of each other's voluntary assistance in the procuring of the things necessary to health and life. It is precisely the contrary with soldiers, and a soldier has not only a regard for all the men of his own corps, but in a degree, a little fainter, for all the soldiers in the army. Nay, the soldiers of two hostile armies, have a feeling of friendship for each other, and this feeling and the acts arising from it, have, when occasion has offered, always been found to exist in proportion to the bravery with which they have fought against each other. Of this military feeling, I do not believe that any man ever possessed a greater portion than myself. I was eight years in the army, during which time I associated less with people out of the army, than any soldier that ever I knew. This partiality I have always retained, I like soldiers, as a class in life, better than any other description of men. Their conversation is more pleasing to me. They have generally seen more than other men; they have less of vulgar prejudices about them: to which may be added, that having felt hardships themselves, they know how to feel for others. This does not, indeed, apply to such as those of whom Mrs. Clarke was the

protectures, but those who have seen service, or who depend solely on their merit for their success. Amongst soldiers less than amongst any other description of men, have I observed the vices of *lying* and *hypocrisy*. I do not recollect a single instance of a soldier in any corps having betrayed, or given up, or exposed another soldier, even for the sake of saving himself from most terrible punishment; and as for selfishness, a soldier who would not give his dinner, his day's provisions, to a comrade in want, would be looked upon as an unnatural brute. It is not to be expected that such generosity of feeling should be found amongst the mass of mankind; those who have not known the vicissitudes and the many wants of a soldier's life, cannot be expected to have the soldier's feelings. I have known the one, and I possess the other; and notwithstanding I have now been accused of hankering after nothing but 'base lucre,' upon this feeling I have always acted. Ay, and upon this feeling I shall have been known to have acted, too, in spite of all that can be done to misrepresent me in the army.

"Under the present circumstances, there is nothing which I can say of myself, that can fairly be called egotism, and there is nothing in praise of my conduct, which can with truth be said that ought not to be said. Being of this opinion, and being sure that every just and sensible man will join therein, I will here introduce a fact or two, which, under any other circumstance, it would be a shame to mention. Lover as I am of base lucre, no soul in distress was ever sent empty away from my door, be the cause of that distress what it might. But to soldiers, their wives and children, to every creature bearing the name or sign of military service about it, I, nor any one belonging to me, ever omitted to show particular marks of compassion and kindness. I wish the public could now pass in review before them, all the unfortunate soldiers that have come to my door, and those who have been to the door of the man, who has called me the *trader* of the army. Would to God that this exhibition could take place, and that inquiry could be made as to the reception that each had

met with. I should not be afraid of the comparison, though he represents me as the enemy of the army, as the man *whom the army calls upon the judges to punish.*

"Late in October, or early in November last, returning home in the dusk of the evening, I found our village full of soldiers. There were about *five hundred* men, a number nearly equal to the whole population of the parish, who had arrived from Portsmouth, last from Portugal, many of whom had been at the battle of Talavera, and had served in both the arduous and fatal campaigns in Spain, and most of whom had suffered either from sickness or from wounds actually received in battle. These men, who had landed at Portsmouth *that same morning*, had marched eighteen miles to Botley, where they found for their accommodation one small inn, and three public houses. All the beds in the whole village, and in the whole parish to its utmost limits, including the bed of every cottager, would not have lodged these men and their wives and children, and all the victuals in the parish would not of course have furnished them with a single meal, without taking from the meals of the people of the parish. The stables, barns, and every other place in which a man could lie down out of the way of actual rain, were prepared with straw. Every body in the village was ready to give up all his room to these people, whose every garment, and limb, and feature, bespoke the misery they had undergone. It was rather unfortunate that both myself and my wife were from home, when they arrived in the village, or I should have lodged a company or two of the privates at least. I found the greater part of them already gone to their straw lodging, and *therefore I could do nothing for them*, but I brought two of the officers, the commanding officer and another, to my house, *not having spare beds for any more, upon so short a notice.* The next day, which happened to be on a Sunday, the whole of the officers, thirteen or fourteen in number, lived at my house, the whole of the day; and of all my whole life, during which I have spent but very few unpleasant days, I never spent so pleasant a day as that. After a lapse of sixteen

years, I once more saw myself at table with nothing but soldiers; nothing but men in red coats, and I felt so happy in being able to give them proofs of my attachment. I never upon any occasion, so much enjoyed, never so sensibly felt the benefits of having been industrious and economical. My guests, on their part, soon found they were at home, and gave full scope to that disposition of gaiety, which prevails amongst soldiers, and particularly after long-endured hardships. It was the first whole day of their being in England, from the time they had quitted it, and certain I am that not a man of them has since seen a happier.

On the Monday morning, before daylight, my whole family, children and all, were up to prepare them a breakfast, and to bid them farewell, and when they left us, the commanding officer, who was a *modest* (?) and sensible Scotchman, observed, that he had in his life *heard* much of English hospitality, but that at Botley, he had seen and felt it.* Now this was no more than what it was my duty to do towards those gentlemen, some of whom had been wounded, and all of whom had greatly suffered in *their* endeavours, at least, to serve their country, while I and my family had been living at home in ease, comfort, and security; and it was a duty peculiarly incumbent upon me, who had

* We are fully disposed to give Cobbett all due credit, for his disposition towards the soldiers, but there is something in the story of the five hundred men at Botley, which is contrary to all probability. The circumstance, of a marching regiment being directed to halt for a night and the whole of the following day and night, at a small obscure village, where it must have been well known, that no accommodation whatever could be procured, and not even food sufficient for their maintenance, except it were given gratuitously by the inhabitants, is in such direct variance with the plan universally adopted in cases of this kind, that we are bound to express our doubts of the truth of a great part of the story as related by Cobbett. With the knowledge which the authorities possessed, of the slender means which the village of Botley possessed for the accommodation of troops, they would have been sent forward in companies or detachments; but to send five hundred men with wives and children into a village, which on a sudden could not provide support for fifty, is rather taxing our credulity at too high a rate.

been a soldier myself, and who knew to what hardships they had been exposed by sea as well as by land. There might too, perhaps, if the workings of my heart could have been nicely analyzed, be something of vanity in my motives, *though I do not believe that there was*. But, at any rate, *I think* I may defy even the devil, in whatever character he may choose to appear, whether as a lawyer, a judge, or an attorney general, to ascribe this action to enmity to the army, or to a disposition or a feeling towards the army, that would lead me to traduce them. What then! was it that army, to which these gentlemen belonged, who called upon the judges to punish me? did this call come from those, who experienced the hospitalities of Botley? did they accuse me of being their traducer, and as being such, call upon the judges to shut me up in prison, and to load me with fines and securities, and would they have accused me of being a lover of base lucre?

“To bring forward to the public, and especially in a work of my own, the relation of a fact like this, would, as I observed before, be a shame, under almost any other circumstances than the present; but under these circumstances, it will, I am confident, be, by every lover of truth, deemed perfectly justifiable. I am, however, less anxious to clear myself to the public, from the charge of being a traducer of the army, than I am to clear myself of that charge to the army itself. I wish not to be thought, and I will not be thought an enemy or a traducer of the army. I have always been a friend of the army. I have never traduced it. I have spent days, and hours, and weeks, in studying how the bettering of the situation of the army might be combined with its efficiency, and both with the security of the country’s civil and political liberties. The plan of service for seven years, which was so generally approved of, was, *I believe*, first suggested to Mr. Windham by me, soon after he was in office. I drew up, in consequence of previous communication with him, the plan which I afterwards published. I have not the vanity to suppose, that in so great a matter, it was likely that I should devise a faultless scheme. But the plan, such as it is,

contains quite sufficient proof, that I was no traducer of the army, that I was no enemy of the army; and that I wished at least, to see formed such a military force, as should at all times, under all circumstances, in all emergencies, render England perfectly safe, defended by the arms of her own sons, who, while they were soldiers, and well disciplined and efficient soldiers, should have all the interests and all the feelings of citizens, and who, in defending the soil of their country, should be sensible that they were defending its rights and liberties."

It might have been supposed, from the publicity which Cobbett gave to those sentiments, that some relaxation in the sentence intended to be passed upon him would have taken place; in this, however, he was mistaken, for on the 9th July he was brought up from the King's Bench prison, and the public expectation, which had been for some days previous so much excited, in anticipation of the sentence which the court would deliver, that Westminster Hall was crowded at an early hour, and it was with considerable difficulty that the avenue to the court could be approached. At the time when the judges took their seats, the passages were so full that all the exertion of the tipstaffs was necessary to make way for the counsel. Lord Ellenborough directed the lower part of the court to be cleared of strangers, but the crowd was too dense to be removed without great confusion, and as the less of the two evils, strangers were suffered to remain.

After the tumult had subsided, the defendants, Mr. Cobbett, Messrs. Budd and Bagshaw, and Mr. Hansard, were brought into court. After the Attorney General had prayed judgment in the usual form; Mr. Justice Grose proceeded to pass the sentence of the court, and principally addressed himself to Mr. Cobbett, animadverting with peculiar severity upon the libel on which the defendant was convicted. "It was a work," said the learned judge, "which no well-disposed mind could doubt to have been framed for the most pernicious objects. Looking at the time at which it was written—looking at the circumstances of the world, there

could be no doubt of the evil intention of the paper. The whole tendency of it is in so many words to excite unwillingness and dislike to the service of the country, amongst those who are to be its defence, and to insult those foreigners who are in our service, to deprive the country of their honourable assistance, and paralyze the energies of the state.

“ At what time was this libel published? At a time when a violent and lawless enemy was threatening our shores. And yet it was with this enemy that the mild and parental government of this country was to be contrasted, and disgraced by the contrast. Our country, where every comfort, every privilege, and every honour, that could be afforded to the army, was afforded by the liberality of the laws; was this to be compared with that country, whose object was conquest, and whose soldiers were sacrificed to every pursuit of insolent and unfeeling ambition? The evil of the publication was, therefore, enhanced by the time at which it was sent forth through the nation.

“ The defendant could not complain of any severity in the justice, which had been freely and fairly dealt out to him. He had had a patient trial. He might have removed, if he could, the doubts which the jury might have entertained of the evil of the pernicious libel, for which he has now to receive sentence. But the objects of the libel were too palpable. The jury found you, William Cobbett, guilty, upon the fullest and most satisfactory evidence. If it were to be allowed that your object was not to enfeeble and embarrass the operations of government, there can be no ground for exculpating you from the guilt of libelling, for the base and degrading object of making a stipend by your crime. If there had been no other imputation upon you, the court, as protecting the purity and peace of the public mind, would have felt itself called on to punish you severely. It is strange that a man, who mixes so much in general and private life as you do, should not see that such acts as those for which you have been tried are only productive of mischief to every mind that is influenced by them, and that they necessarily terminate in punishment on

the guilty authors. It is strange that experience should not have taught you, and that you should be only advancing in a continual progress of malignity. What were the circumstances which you distorted in your libel? the whole intention of which was, to throw disgrace on the government, and to disgust and alienate the army. If you had any thing to offer in extenuation, you might have offered it; the court would have received it, and at all events impartial justice would have been dealt to you. I now pass the sentence of the court upon you, William Cobbett, as the principal criminal amongst those who now stand before the court; the court do accordingly adjudge—that you, William Cobbett, pay to our lord the king a fine of £1000, that you be imprisoned in his majesty's gaol of Newgate for the space of two years, and that at the expiration of that time, you enter into a recognizance to keep the peace for seven years, yourself in the sum of £3000, and two good and sufficient securities in the sum of £1000 each, and further, that you be imprisoned till that recognizance be entered into, and that fine paid."

Messrs. Budd and Bagshaw were sentenced to two months' imprisonment in the King's Bench, and Mr. Hansard, whose offence was considered by the court as second in enormity to Mr. Cobbett's, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment in the King's Bench, and to enter into recognizances to keep the peace for three years, himself in £400, and two sureties in £200 each.

Mr. Cobbett appeared not much affected by his sentence, his deportment during the delivery was unembarrassed, he left the court with a smile on his countenance, and was immediately conveyed to Newgate.

The day subsequent to his committal to prison, Cobbett sent forth the following most extraordinary statement, which we shall give entire, as one of the most extraordinary instances of misrepresentation, not to call it by a harsher name, which was perhaps ever submitted to the public, who were decidedly able, from the notoriety of the case, to give to it the fullest and most complete contradiction.

"The notoriety," says Cobbett, "of what has taken place in regard to myself, renders it almost unnecessary for me to say anything in the way of apology for once more sending my Register forth to the public, without containing anything written by myself. The time I had to remain at home, was not a tenth part sufficient for the making of anything like a due preparation for my departure. On Wednesday morning about five o'clock, I left my home and family, and yesterday (the 6th July) I had to appear in the Court of King's Bench, and NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, ON ANY ACCOUNT WHATEVER, I AM A PRISONER, AFTER HAVING BEEN A PUBLIC WRITER FOR TEN YEARS IN ENGLAND, AND NEVER HAVING BEFORE BEEN EVEN CALLED IN QUESTION, NEVER HAVING BEFORE HAD EVEN PROCEEDINGS COMMENCED AGAINST ME IN ANY SHAPE, FOR ANY THING WRITTEN BY ME. In such a situation, to set about writing for the information or amusement of the public, would be the height of affectation, for every one must *feel*, that it is, under such circumstances, quite impossible to divest one's mind from those circumstances. Indeed, to be able to do this, would argue a degree of insensibility, incompatible with private affection, and public-spirited motives. It is impossible, that so situated, I can feel inclined to write for the press, and this being manifest to everybody, it must be equally manifest, that if I were to attempt to write now, I should force the task upon myself for motives, arising merely out of considerations connected with the proprietorship of the Register, and as I never have in any *one* instance, written for *gain*, so I am resolved not to do it now. *Yesterday* the 6th July, exactly ten years ago, I landed in England, after *having* lost a fortune in America, solely for the sake of that *same* England, and *yesterday* saw me sent to a prison for that *same* England. It is quite impossible for me to banish reflections of this nature from my mind, but they are in some measure driven out, by the contempt which I feel for the venal slaves, who have seized upon this, as they regard it, moment of my depression, to misrepresent and insult me."

We have not the slightest disposition to cavil with Mr. Cobbett on minor points, but where he wilfully and boldly imposes upon the public, a statement at variance with all truth, we cannot, with that regard to partiality which we have uniformly observed, in the delineation of the character of that extraordinary man, and consistently with that fidelity, which, as the biographer of his life, we ought to adopt, allow so gross a mis-statement to pass unnoticed. Mr. Cobbett, with the view, no doubt, of exciting the compassion of the public, as well as their indignation at the severity of the sentence, which had been passed upon him, tells them, in the foregoing passage, extracted from his Register of July 7th 1810, "that for the FIRST time in his life, *on any account whatever*, he is now a prisoner, NEVER having before been even called in question; NEVER having before had even proceedings commenced against him IN ANY shape, for anything WRITTEN BY HIM."

Where must have been the memory of Mr. Cobbett when he published the foregoing statement? Had he no recollection left of a nobleman of the name of Hardwicke, whom he libelled?—of another nobleman of the name of Redesdale, whom he also libelled?—of an honourable judge of the name of Osborne, whom he also libelled?—and of a Mr. Marsden under Secretary of State for Ireland, whom he also libelled, and for which libels he was sentenced to the payment of a fine to the king of £1000 and to be imprisoned two years in Newgate, finding security for his future good behaviour? Had Mr. Cobbett wholly forgotten another gentleman of the name of Plunkett, whom he had also libelled, and for which libel he was sentenced to pay a fine of £500? all of which occurrences took place in the year 1804, only six years previously to his second introduction into the prison of Newgate; and yet Cobbett boldly publishes to the world, that he had never been a prisoner before the year 1810, that he had never been prosecuted for any thing that he had ever written, or that legal proceedings were ever adopted against him for any thing that had ever emanated from his pen. We shal

say nothing of the prosecution against him by Dr. Rush, in America, for a libel, by which he lost almost the whole of his property, and was obliged to return to England, although he very positively tells us, that it was on account of that same England that he lost his property; whereas no doubt whatever can exist, that if he had not lampooned Dr. Rush as Dr. Sangrado, and allowed him to pursue his own course in bleeding and purging the good citizens of New York, he would have remained in possession of the property, which his talents and economy had enabled him to amass, without being obliged to sacrifice it under the hammer of a sheriff's broker. He was also prosecuted in America for a libel on the Spanish ambassador, of which he was found guilty; and having now adduced two prosecutions in America and two in England for things written by him, we cannot wholly acquit Cobbett of a gross intent to impose upon the English people, by telling them, that he had never had any proceedings instituted against him in any shape, for any thing that had been written by him.

In regard to the punishment inflicted upon Cobbett, for the alleged libel on the German Legion and the government, it was allowed by every one to have been most severe; it must not, however, be supposed, that in the punishment awarded to him, government kept its eye only upon the libel on the affair at Ely. In the estimation of government, Cobbett was one of the most notorious political offenders. The style of his writings, so well adapted to the capacity of Englishmen, the manly and patriotic sentiments which breathed in every page, and above all, his powerful and unflinching opposition to the ministers of the day, drew down upon him their secret enmity, and the Attorney General was instructed to watch his writings narrowly, with the hope of soon succeeding in catching him in their net. The result of the Ely affair, soon proved to Cobbett, that he was a selected victim of an oppressive, overbearing, and tyrannical aristocratical government. The dragging of Englishmen under the bayonets and sabres of Hanoverians, and the dregs of the prisons, was an atrocity

excessive enough to move even a stone that lay in native Eng'ish soil; nor is it to be wondered at, that it thrilled the spirit of a brave, warm-hearted, and genuine Englishman, and a lover of his country even to the verge of prejudice. He was at that time living in the bosom of his family, on his farm at Botley, cultivating those useful and rational pursuits to which he had been accustomed from his youth, in the midst of domestic enjoyment of no ordinary kind, and leading no inglorious or useless life. His long imprisonment, and the ruin of his affairs, left deep traces on a quick and resentful, but certainly not an ungenerous mind. Cobbett had at least the negative merit of never making any secret of his hatred of the wretches, who had stabbed him, and through him the liberties of Englishmen. In the dedication from Long Island of one of his books to a friend, Timothy Brown, Esquire, of Peckham Lodge, Surrey, he thus alludes to this infamous transaction:

"You were one of those *who sought acquaintance with me*, when I was shut up in a felon's jail for two years for having expressed my indignation at seeing Englishmen flogged in the heart of England, under a guard of German bayonets and sabres, and when I had on my head a thousand pounds fine, and *seven years recognisances*.* You, at the end of the two years, took me from the prison in your carriage home to your house. You and our kind friend, Walker, are even yet held in bonds for my *good behaviour*, the *seven years not being expired*. All these things are written in the very core of my heart, and when I act as if I had forgotten any one of them, may no name on earth be so much detested and despised as that of

Your faithful friend, and most obedient servant,

W. COBBETT.

* With the extraordinary vindictive spirit with which Cobbett was treated by the government, how did it happen that these recognisances were not treated. The libel on Lord Hardwicke was tried in Easter term 1804, when the seven years recognizance was imposed upon him. In 1810, he was tried and convicted of another libel on government, nearly two years before the term of his former recognisances expired.

Cobbett never pretended to forgive his persecutors, he denied that this was a christian duty, but as his glowing resentment was surely not without cause, it is not without excuse. The following picture of domestic life, which must charm every body, and which is well worth the attentive study of every man and woman, who has a family to train, will be the means of introducing Cobbett's own remarks on this eventful period of life.

"Being myself fond of *book-learning*, and knowing well its powers, I naturally wished my children to possess it too; but never did I *impose it*, upon any one of them. My first duty was to make them *healthy and strong*, if I could, and to give them as much enjoyment of life as possible. Born and bred up in the sweet air myself, I was resolved that they should be bred up in it too; enjoying rural scenes and sports, as I had done when a boy, as much as any one that ever was born, I was resolved that they should have the same enjoyments tendered to them. When I was a very little boy, I was in the barley sowing season, going along by the side of a field near Waverley Abbey; the primroses and blue-bells bespangling the banks on both sides of me, a thousands linnets singing in a spreading oak over my head, while the gingle of the traces and the whistling of the plough boys saluted my ear from over the hedge; and as it were to snatch me from the enchantment, the hounds at that instant, having started a hare in the hanger on the other side of the field, came up scampering over it in full cry, taking me after them for many a mile. I was not more than eight years old, but this particular scene has presented itself to my mind many times every year from that day to this. I always enjoy it over again; and I was resolved to give, if possible, the same enjoyments to my children.

"Men's circumstances are so various; there is such a great variety in their situations in life, their business, the extent of their pecuniary means, the local state in which they are placed, their internal resources; the variety in all these respects is so great, that, as applicable to every family, it

would be impossible to lay down any set of rules, or maxims, touching every matter relating to the management and the rearing up of children. In giving an account, therefore, of my *own* conduct, in this respect, I am not to be understood as supposing, that *every father can*, or ought to attempt to do the same, but while it will be seen that there are many, and these the most important part of their conduct, that all fathers may imitate if they choose; there is no part of it which thousands and thousands of fathers might not adopt and pursue, and adhere to, to the very letter.

“I effected every thing without scolding, and even without command. My children are a family of scholars; each sex its appropriate species of learning, and I could safely take my oath, that I never *ordered* a child of mine, son or daughter, *to look into a book* in my life. My two oldest sons, when about eight years old, were for the sake of their health, placed for a short time at a clergyman’s at Micheldever, and my eldest daughter, a little older, at a school a few miles from Botley to avoid taking them to London in the winter. But with these exceptions, never had they, while children, *teacher* of any description, and I never, and nobody else ever taught any of them to read, write, or any thing else, except in *conversation*, and yet no man was ever more anxious to be the father of a family of clever and learned persons.

“I accomplished my purpose indirectly. The first thing of all was *health*, which was secured by the deeply interesting and *never ending sports of the field and pleasures of the garden*. Luckily, these things were treated of in books and pictures of endless variety, so that on wet days, in long evenings these came into the play. A large, strong table in the middle of the room, their mother sitting at her work, used to be surrounded with them, the baby, if big enough, set up in a high chair. Here were inkstands, pens, pencils, india-rubber and paper, all in abundance, and every one scrabbled about as he or she pleased. There were prints of animals of all sorts, books treating of them, others treating of gardening, of flowers, of husbandry, of hunting, coursing,

shooting, fishing, planting, and in short of every thing, in regard to which we had something to do. One would be trying to imitate a bit of my writing, another drawing the pictures of some of our dogs and horses, a third poking over Bewick's quadrupeds, and picking out what he said about them, but our book of never failing resource was the French *MAISON RUSTIQUE* or FARM HOUSE, which it is said was the book that first tempted DUKESNOIS, the famous physician in the reign of Louis XIV. to *learn to read*. Here are all the four-legged animals, from the horse down to the mouse, portraits and all, all the birds, reptiles, insects, all the modes of rearing, managing and using the tame ones, and of destroying those that are mischievous; all the various traps, springs, nets, all the implements of husbandry and gardening, all the labours of the field and garden exhibited, as well as the rest in plates, and there was I, in my leisure moments, to join the inquisitive group, to read the French, and to tell them what it meant in English, when the picture did not sufficiently explain itself. I have never been without a copy of this book for forty years, except during the time that I was flying from the dungeons of Castlereagh and Sidmouth, in 1817, and when I got to Long Island, the first book I bought was another *Maison Rustique*.

“What need we of *schools*? What need we of teachers? What need of scolding and force to induce children to read, write, and love books? What need of cards, dice, or any other game to kill time? but in fact to implant in the infant heart a love of gaming, one of the most destructive of all human vices? We did not want to kill time, we were always *busy*, wet weather or dry weather, winter or summer. There was no force in any case, no command, no authority, none of these was ever wanted. To teach children the habit of early rising was a great object, and every one knows how young people cling to their beds, and how loth they are to go to those beds. This was a capital matter, because here were industry and health both at stake. Yet, I avoided command even *here*, and merely offered a reward. The child that was

down stairs first, was called the LARK for that day, and, further, *sat at my right hand at dinner*. They soon discovered that to rise early, they must go to bed early, and thus was this most important object secured, with regard to girls as well as boys. Nothing more inconvenient, and indeed more disgusting than to have to do with girls, or young women, who lounge in bed. ‘A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep.’ Solomon knew them well; he had, I dare say, seen the breakfast cooling, carriages and horses, and servants waiting, the sun coming burning on, the day wasting, the night growing dark too early, appointments broken, and the objects of journeys defeated, and all this from the lolloping in bed of persons, who ought to have risen with the sun. No beauty, no modesty, no accomplishment are a compensation for the effects of laziness in woman, and of all the proofs of laziness, none is so unequivocal as that of lying late in bed. Love makes men overlook this *vice*, for it is a vice for a while, but this does not last for life; besides health demands early rising; the management of a house imperiously demands it; but health that most precious possession, without which there is nothing else worth possessing, demands it too. The morning air is the most wholesome and strengthening, even in crowded cities, men might do pretty well with the aid of the morning air, but how are they to rise early, if they go to bed late?

“But to do the things, I did, you must love your home yourself to rear up children in this manner, you must live with them, you must make them too feel by your conduct, that you prefer this to any other mode of passing your time. All men cannot lead this mode of life, but many may, and all much more than many do. My *occupation*, to be sure was chiefly carried on at home, but I had always enough to do, I never spent an idle week or even day in my whole life, yet I found time to talk with them, to walk or ride about with them, and when forced to go from home, always took one or more with me. You must be good tempered too with them; they must like your company better than any other

persons; they must not wish you away, not fear your coming back, not look upon your departure as a holiday. When my business kept me away from the *scrabbling* table, a petition often came, that I would go and talk with the *group*, and the bearer was generally the youngest, being the most likely to succeed. When I went from home all followed me to the outer gate, and looked after me till the carriage or horse was out of sight. At the time appointed for my return, all were prepared to meet me, and if it were late at night, they sat up as long as they were able to keep their eyes open. This love of parents, and this constant pleasure at home, made them not even think of seeking pleasure abroad, and they thus were kept from vicious playmates and early corruption.

"This is the age too to teach children to be trust-worthy, and to be merciful and humane. We lived in a garden of about two acres, partly kitchen-garden with walls, partly shrubbery and trees, and partly grass. There were the peaches as tempting as any that ever grew, and yet as safe from fingers as if no child were ever in the garden. It was not necessary to *forbid*. The black-birds, the thrushes, the white throats, and even that very shy bird, the goldfinch, had their nests, and bred up their young ones in great abundance, all about this little spot, constantly the play-place of six children, and one of the latter had its nest, and brought up its young ones in a raspberry bush, within two yards of a walk, and at the same time that we were gathering the ripe raspberries. We give dogs, and justly, great credit for sagacity and memory, but the following two most curious instances, which I should not venture to state, if there were not witnesses to the facts in my neighbours at Botley, as well as in my own family, will show that birds are not in this respect, inferior to the canine race. All country people know that the skylark is a very shy bird, that its abode is the open fields, that it settles on the ground only, that it seeks safety in the wideness of space, that it avoids enclosures, and is never seen in gardens. A part of our ground was a grass plot of about forty rods, or a quarter of an acre, which one

year was left to be mowed for hay. A pair of larks coming out of the fields into the middle of a pretty populous village, chose to make their nest in the middle of this little spot, and at not more than about thirty-five yards from one of the doors of the house, in which there were about twelve persons living, and six of those children, who had constant access to all parts of the ground. There we saw the cock rising up and singing, then taking his turn upon the eggs, and by and by we observed him cease to sing, and saw them both constantly engaged in bringing food to the young ones. No unintelligible hint to fathers and mothers of the human race, who have before marriage taken delight in *music*. But the time came for mowing the grass, I waited a good many days for the brood to get away, but at last I determined on the day, and if the larks were there still, to leave a patch of grass standing round them. In order not to keep them in dread longer than necessary, I brought three able mowers, who would cut the whole in about an hour, and as the plot was nearly circular, set them to mow *round*, beginning at the outside. And now for sagacity indeed! The moment the men began to whet their scythes, the two old larks began to flutter over the nest, and to make a great clamour. When the men began to mow, they flew round and round, stooping so low, when near the men, as almost to touch their bodies, making a great chattering at the same time; but before the men had got round with the second swarth, they flew to the nest, and away they went, young ones and all, across the river, at the foot of the ground, and settled in the long grass in my neighbour's orchard.

The other instance relates to a house marten. It is well known that these birds build their nests, under the eaves of inhabited houses, and sometimes under those of door-porches, but we had one that built its nest *in the house*, and upon the top of a common door case, the door of which opened into a room out of the main passage into the house. Perceiving that the marten had begun to build its nest there, we kept the front door open in the day time, but were obliged to fasten

it at night. It went on, had young ones, and the young ones flew. I used to open the door in the morning early, and then the birds carried on their affairs till night. The next year the marten came again, and had another brood in the same place. It found its old nest, and having repaired it, and put it in order, went on again in the former way, and it would, I dare say, have continued to come to the end of its life, if we had remained there so long, notwithstanding there were six healthy children in the house, making just as much noise as they pleased.

"Now what sagacity in these birds, to discover that those were places of safety; and how happy must it have made us, the parents, to be sure, that our children had thus imbibed habits the contrary of cruelty. For be it engraven on your heart, young man, that whatever appearances may say to the contrary, cruelty is always accompanied with cowardice, and also with perfidy, when that is called for by the circumstances of the case; and that habitual acts of cruelty to other creatures, will nine times out of ten, produce, when the power is possessed, cruelty to human beings. The ill-usage of horses, and particularly asses, is a grave and a just charge against this nation. No other nation is guilty of it to the same extent. Not only by blows, but by privation, are we cruel towards these useful, *docile*, and patient creatures, and especially towards the last, which is the most docile,(?) and patient, and laborious of the two, whilst the food that satisfies it, is of the coarsest and least costly kind, and in quantity so small. In the habitual ill-treatment of this animal, which, in addition to all its labours, has the milk taken from its young ones, to administer a remedy for our ailments, there is something that bespeaks ingratitude hardly to be described. In a Register that I wrote from Long Island, I said that amongst all the things of which I had been bereft, I regretted no one so much as a very diminutive mare, on which my children had all, in succession learned to ride. She was become useless for them, and indeed for any other purpose, but the recollection of her was so much entwined with so many

past circumstances, which at that distance my mind conjured up, that I really was very uneasy, lest she should fall into cruel hands. By good luck, she was, after a while, turned out on the wide world to shift for herself, and when we got back, and had a place for her to *stand* in, from her native forest we brought her to Kensington, where she soon became as fat as a mole. Now, not only have I no moral right, considering my ability to pay for keeping, to deprive her of life, but it would be unjust and ungrateful in me, to withhold from her sufficient food and lodging, to make life as pleasant as possible, while that life lasts.

“In the mean time the book-learning crept in of its own accord, by imperceptible degrees. Children naturally want to be like their parents, and to do what they do; the boys following their father, and the girls their mother; and as I was always writing or reading, mine naturally desired to do something in the same way. But at the same time, they heard no talk from fools or drinkers; saw me with no idle, empty, gabbling companions; saw no vain and affected coxcombs, and no tawdry and extravagant women; saw no nasty gormandizing, and heard no gabble about play houses, and romances, and other nonsense that fit boys to be lobby loungers, and girls to be the ruin of industrious and frugal young men.

“We wanted no stimulants of this sort to keep up our spirits, our various pleasing pursuits were quite sufficient for that, and the book-learning came amongst the rest of the pleasures, to which it was in some sort necessary. I remember, that one year I raised a prodigious crop of fine melons, under hand glasses, and I learned how to do it from a gardening book, or at least that book was necessary to remind me of the details. Having passed part of an evening in talking to the boys, about getting this crop, ‘Come,’ said I, ‘let us now *read the book.*’ Then the book came forth, and to work we went, following very strictly the precepts of the book. I read the thing but once, but the eldest boy read it perhaps twenty times over, and explained all about the matter to the others. Why here was a motive. Then he had to tell the

garden labourer what to do with the melons. Now, I will engage, that more was really learned by this single lesson, than would have been learned by spending at this son's age, a year at school, and be happy and delighted all the while. When any dispute arose amongst them about hunting or shooting, or any other of their pursuits, they by degrees found out the way of settling it by reference to some book, and when any difficulty occurred as to the meaning, they referred to me, who, if at home, always instantly attended to them, in these matters.

"They began writing, by taking words out of printed books, finding out which letter was which, by asking me, or asking those, who knew the letters one from another, and by imitating bits of my writing, it is surprising, how soon they began to write a hand like mine, very small, very faint stroked, and nearly plain as print. The first use that any one of them made of the pen, was to write to me, though in the same house with them. They began doing this in mere scratches, before they knew how to make any one letter, and as I was always folding up letters and directing them, so were they, and they were sure to receive a prompt answer, with most encouraging compliments, if not by the bearer, yet by a juvenile messenger of the family. All the meddlings and teasings of friends, and what was more serious, the pressing prayers of their anxious mother, about sending them to school, I withstood, without the slightest effect on my resolution. As to friends, preferring my own judgment to theirs, I did not care much, but an expression of anxiety, implying a doubt of the soundness of my own judgment, coming perhaps twenty times a day from her, whose care they were as well as mine, was not a matter to smile at, and very great trouble it did give me. My answer at last was, as to the boys, I want them to be like me, and as to the girls, in whose hands can they be so safe as in yours. Therefore my resolution is taken, *go to school they shall not.*

"Nothing is much more annoying than the intermeddling of friends in a case like this. The wife appeals to them,

MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM COBBETT, ESQ.

and *good breeding*, that is to say, *nonsense*, is sure to put them on her side. Then they, particularly the women, when describing the surprising progress made by their own sons at school, used, if one of mine were present, to turn to him, and ask, to what school he went, and what he was *learning*? I leave any one to judge of his opinion of her, and whether he would like her the better for that. Bless me, so tall! and not *learned* any thing *yet*? O yes, I used to say, he has learned to ride, and hunt, and shoot, and fish, and look after cattle and sheep, and to work in the garden, and to feed his dogs, and to go from village to village in the dark. This is the way I used to manage with troublesome customers of this sort. And how glad the children used to be, when they got clear of such criticising people. And how grateful they felt to me, for the protection which they saw that I gave them, against that state of restraint of which other peoples' boys complained. Go whither they might, they found no place so pleasant as home, and no soul that came near them, afforded them so many means of gratification as they received from me.

"In this happy state we lived until the year 1810, when the government laid its merciless fangs upon me, dragging me from these delights, and *crammed me into a jail amongst felons*. This added to the difficulties of my task of teaching, for now I was snatched away from the only scene, in which it could, as I thought, properly be executed. But even these difficulties were got over. The blow was, to be sure, a terrible one, and, O God! how was it felt by these poor children. It was in the month of July, when the horrible sentence was passed upon me. My wife having left her children in the care of her good and affectionate sister, was in London waiting to know the doom of her husband. When the news arrived at Botley, the three boys, one eleven, the other nine, and the other seven years old, were hoeing cabbages in that garden, which had been the source of so much delight. When the account of the savage sentence was brought to them, the youngest could not for some time be made to

understand what a jail was, and when he did, he all in a tremour exclaimed, 'Now, I am sure, William, that PAPA is not in a place like that.' The other, in order to disguise his tears, and smother his sobs, fell to work with the hoe, and chopped about like a blind person. This account, when it reached me, affected me more, filled me with deeper resentment, than any other circumstance. And oh, how I despise the wretches who talk of my vindictiveness, and of my exultation at the confusion of those, who inflicted those sufferings. How I despise the base creatures, the crawling slaves, the callous and cowardly hypocrites, who affect to be *shocked* (tender souls!) at my expressions of joy, at the death of Gibbs, Ellenborough, Perceval, Liverpool, Canning, and the rest of the tribe, that I have already seen out, and at the fatal workings of that system, for endeavouring to check which, I was thus punished. How I despise the wretches, and how I above all things enjoy their ruin, and anticipate their utter beggary. 'What! I am to forgive, am I, such injuries as these, and that too without any atonement? Oh no! I have not so read the Holy Scriptures, I have not from them learned that I am not to rejoice at the fall of unjust foes, and it makes a part of my happiness, to be able to tell millions of men that I do thus rejoice, and that I have the means of calling on so many just and merciful men to rejoice along with me.'

In another part of his work, Cobbett thus speaks of this transaction:—

"In the year 1809, some English local militia men were flogged in the Isle of Ely, in England, under a guard of Hanoverians, then stationed in England. I reading an account of this in a London newspaper, called the Courier, expressed my indignation at it in such terms, as it became an Englishman to do. The Attorney General Gibbs, was set on upon me; he harrassed me for nearly a year, then brought me to trial, and I was by Ellenborough, Grose, Le Blanc, and Bailey, sentenced to two years imprisonment in Newgate, to pay a fine to the king of a thousand pounds, and to

be held in heavy bail for seven years after the expiration of the imprisonment. Every one regarded it as a sentence of *death*. I lived in the country at the time, seventy miles from London; I had a farm on my hands; I had a family of small children, amongst whom I had constantly lived; I had a most anxious and devoted wife, who was too in that state, which rendered the separation more painful tenfold. I was put into a place amongst felons, from which I had to rescue myself at the price of TWELVE GUINEAS A WEEK!! for the whole of the two years. The king, poor man! was at the close of my imprisonment not in a condition to receive the thousand pounds, but his son punctually received it "in his name and behalf," and *he keeps it still*.

"The sentence, though it proved not to be one of death, was, in effect, one of ruin, as far as then possessed property went. But this appeared as nothing, compared with the circumstance, that I must now have a child born in a felon's jail, or be absent from the scene at the time of its birth. My wife, who had come to see me for the last time previously to her lying in, perceiving my deep dejection at the approach of her departure for Botley, resolved not to go, and actually went and took a lodging as near to Newgate as she could find one, in order that the communication between us might be as speedy as possible, and in order that I might see the doctor and receive assurances from him relative to her state. The nearest that she could find, was in Skinner-street, at the corner of a street leading to Smithfield. So that there she was, amidst the incessant rattle of coaches and butchers' carts, and the noise of cattle, dogs, and bawling men, instead of being in a quiet and commodious country house, with neighbours and servants, and every thing necessary about her. Yet, so great is the power of the mind in such cases, she, though the circumstances proved uncommonly perilous, and were attended with the loss of the child, bore her sufferings with the greatest composure, because at any minute she could send a message to, and hear from me. If she had gone to Botley, leaving me in that state of anxiety in which she saw me, I am satis-

fied she would have died, and that event taking place at such a distance from me, how was I to contemplate her corpse, surrounded by her distracted children, and to have escaped death or madness myself?

"If such was not the effect of this merciless act of the government towards me, that amiable body may be well assured that I have taken and recorded the will for the deed, and that as such it will live in my memory as long as that memory shall last."

Speaking of the conduct of his family during his imprisonment, Cobbett says, "Now then the book-learning was forced upon us. I had a farm in hand. It was necessary that I should be constantly informed of what was doing. I gave all the orders, whether as to purchases, sales, ploughing, sowing, breeding, in short, with regard to every thing, and the things were in endless number and variety, and always full of interest. My eldest son and daughter could now write well and fast. One or the other of these was always at Botley, and I had with me, having hired the best part of the keeper's house, one or two besides, either their brother or sister. We had a hamper with a lock and two keys, which came up once a week, or oftener, bringing me fruit and all sorts of country fare; for the carriage of which, cost free, I was indebted to as good a man as ever God created, the late Mr. George Rogers, of Southampton; who, in the prime of life, died deeply lamented by thousands, but by none more deeply than by me and my family, who have to thank him, and the whole of his excellent family, for benefits and marks of kindness without number.

"This hamper, which was always at both ends of the line looked for with the most lively interest, became our school. It brought me a journal of labours, proceedings, and occurrences, written on paper of shape and size uniform, and so contrived, as to margins, as to admit of binding. The journal used, when my eldest son was the writer, to be interspersed with drawings of our dogs, colts, or any thing that he wanted me to have a correct idea of. The hamper brought

me plants, bulbs, and the like, that I might see the size of them, and almost every one sent his or her most beautiful flowers, the earliest violets, and primroses, and cowslips, and blue bells, the earliest twigs of trees, and in short every thing that they thought calculated to delight me. The moment the hamper arrived, I, casting aside every thing else, set to work to answer every question, to give new directions, and to add any thing likely to give pleasure at Botley. Every hamper brought one letter, as they called it, if not more, from every child, and to every letter I wrote an answer, sealed up and sent to the party, being sure that that was the way to produce other and better letters, for though they could not read what I wrote, and though their own consisted at first of mere scratches, and afterwards, for a while, of a few words written down for them to imitate, I always thanked them for their *pretty* letter, and never expressed any wish to see them write better, but took care to write in a very neat and plain hand myself, and to do up my letter in a very neat manner.

“ Thus, while the ferocious tigers, thought I was doomed to incessant mortification, and to rage that must extinguish my mental powers, I found in my children, and in their spotless, and courageous, and affectionate mother, delights to which the callous hearts of those tigers were strangers. ‘Heaven first taught letters for some wretches aid.’ How often did this line of Pope occur to me, when I opened the little ‘*spuddling* letters’ from Botley. This correspondence occupied a good part of my time. I had all the children with me, turn and turn about; and in order to give the boys exercise, and to give the two eldest an opportunity of beginning to learn French, I used, for a part of the two years, to send them for a few hours a day to an abbe, who lived in Castle-street, Holborn. All this was a great relaxation to my mind, and when I had to return to my literary labours, I returned *fresh* and cheerful, full of vigour, and full of hope of finally seeing my unjust and merciless foes at my feet; and that, too, without caring a straw on whom their fall might bring calamity, so that my own family were safe, because,

say what any one might, the community, taken as a whole, had suffered this thing to be done unto us.

"The paying of the work people, the keeping of the accounts, the referring to books, the writing and reading of letters, this everlasting mixture of amusement with book-learning, made me, almost to my own surprise, find at the end of two years, that I had a parcel of scholars growing up about me, and long before the end of the time, I had dictated my Register to my two eldest children. Then there was copying out of books, which taught spelling correctly. The calculations about the forming of affairs forced arithmetic upon us; the use, the necessity of the thing, led to the study. By and by we had to look into the laws to know what to do about the highways, about the game, about the poor, and all rural and parochial affairs. I was, indeed, by the fangs of government, defeated in my fondly cherished project of making my sons farmers on their own land, and keeping them from all temptations to seek vicious and enervating enjoyments, but those fangs, merciless as they had been, had not been able to prevent me from laying in for their lives a store of useful information, habits of industry, care, and sobriety, and a taste for innocent, healthful, and manly pleasures: the fangs had made me and them penniless, but had not been able to take from us our health, or our mental possessions, and these were ready for application as circumstances might ordain."

Such were the lucubrations of William Cobbett during his imprisonment in Newgate, but considering the apparent independence of his character, his hatred of even the semblance of showing to his enemies that he quailed under the infliction of the heavy blows which they had so unmercifully laid upon him, it must excite some little surprise that he could stoop to send forth such an address to the public, apparently for the purpose of discountenancing a penny subscription, which was proposed to be set on foot by a few individuals, but in reality to puff off his Registers, and to induce the public to come forward and purchase them, as the best and most efficient means of assisting him under his present trying difficulties.

With a becoming sense of propriety he objects to the penny subscription ; but in return, he has the modesty to inform the public, that if they will buy up all his Registers, it will be a source of great benefit to him. Now there is no doubt that many hundreds of persons would have been found, who would willingly have given their penny towards the liquidation of the heavy fine that was imposed upon him, and in some degree to reimburse him for other losses to which his incarceration must have exposed him, but it was no trifle to tell an individual that the price of a copy of his Register was 25½ GUINEAS, and that if the public would take the whole stock off his hands, it would render him an essential service.

The following is the address which he issued from Newgate, and there are in some parts of it a *littleness*, which is by no means calculated to enhance the character of Cobbett in the opinion of our readers.

“Many Gentlemen have by letter, as well as verbally, proposed to me the putting forward a subscription, for the purpose of indemnifying me and my family, against the heavy expences and loss, which have been, and must be incurred in consequence of that prosecution ; the nature, the progress, and the result of which are too well known to be here dwelt upon. It must be manifest to every one, that these expences, including all the various sorts of them, will extend to several thousands of pounds, besides the loss which I must suffer in my concern at home, and indeed in many ways, which cannot well be mentioned, and which it is not at all necessary to mention, or to hint, to those who have ever known what it is to be so situated, as to lead the world to believe that pecuniary distress, if not ruin is even the possible consequence. I am, however, happy to say, that I have been not only able to withstand all pressure of the sort here alluded to, but that without any extraordinary aid from any quarter, I should feel confident of my ability to proceed, and with the blessing of continued health, make a suitable provision for all my children ; yet, though I neither feel nor dread poverty, I do not think that I ought to neglect any

means consistent with honesty and honour, to guard myself, and what is of more consequence, my family against it. My health, thank God, is as good as ever it was. But I have no security for either health or life, any more than other men, and if I were now to attempt an insurance upon my life, Newgate would tell pretty strongly against me. It is, therefore, impossible for me not to feel an anxious desire to see my family at least guarded, against the certain expense and loss above mentioned. But I have, as has been stated, to two in particular, of the gentlemen, who have proposed the subscription, an objection to that mode of obtaining indemnity. There is, however, another mode, which though perhaps attended in the end with little positive and numerical gain, *which would answer all my views full as well*, while it would remove every objection, which the mode of subscription presents. It is this, upon reviewing my stock of printed books, *I find that I have a number of SETS OF THE REGISTER*, from its commencement to the present time, which by reprinting one whole volume, and part of another, I can make complete. There will be in each set *seventeen volumes*, the price of which, bound in the usual way, will be, what it has always been, *25½ guineas!!* about one third of which goes to the bookbinder and the publisher, exclusive of the cost of paper and printing. The exact number that I have of these sets, I do not yet know, but this I know, that when these are disposed of, there never will be another complete copy to be sold, as I shall now have every set that can be completed, made up and prepared for sale. In the course of a few years, all these sets would be disposed of in the usual course of bookselling, *but an immediate sale of the whole*, would from the considerations before mentioned, *produce great convenience to me*, besides the ease of mind, which would arise from reflecting on the security that it would give to my family, in case my long imprisonment should, as I trust it will not, be attended with consequences fatal to myself. Such gentlemen, therefore, as wished for

the opening of a subscription for the purpose above mentioned, will in this mode have an opportunity of doing that which will be equally advantageous, and much more agreeable to me; and all that I shall say in the way of *request*, is, that each individual disposed to further the object in view, would recollect that in this case, as in all others where success depends upon the co-operation of many, each individual so disposed, should look upon that success as depending wholly upon himself. and should conclude, that *unless he act up to his wishes, every one else will content himself with wishes alone*. The sets are now completing as fast as possible, and will be ready for delivery on the 1st September."

Cobbett lost no time in completing the sets of the Register, but he found that they still remained on his hands, and that 25 guineas was a sum of money, which few were disposed to pay, notwithstanding the *great advantage and the ease of mind*, which it would be the means of procuring him. In this instance, Cobbett truly experienced the verity of the adage, that by asking too much, we frequently get nothing. His demand upon the public was by far too extortionate; the penny subscription was put a stop to, and Cobbett soon found that there was no great occasion for any particular expedition to be used in the making up of his Registers.

One of the first acts which Cobbett performed after his liberation from Newgate, was to send forth another statement of the prosecution to which he had been subject, but which was in a great degree unnecessary; it was almost *verbatim* with that which he published in his Register, immediately on his imprisonment taking place; he, however, closes this statement, with some remarks, which not only apply very particularly to his private life, but as a specimen of his strong, and nervous style of writing, is not to be paralleled in any other part of his work

Having vented the blackness of his spleen upon the Attorney General, Cobbett enters upon the nature and effect of his imprisonment. "I was well aware," says he, "that a

prison, *though I had never seen the inside of a prison in my life,** must differ very materially from a dwelling house. I was aware of many of the disagreeable circumstances attendant on such a state, *but I had no idea of the REALITY.* That part of the prison to which I was committed, consisted of a yard and divers rooms. The rooms were numerous, the yard about 35 feet, by 25 feet. Each room contained, or was intended to contain, two or three more beds. Each bed room was locked up at about nine o'clock at night, and kept locked till about seven o'clock in the morning. The doorway leading from the passage of the rooms to the yard, was also locked. The windows were barred with iron. The walls that surrounded the yard were the sides of houses, and of course there could be very little sun or air. *But the companions!!* What companions had I? Men, guilty of the most odious and detestable crimes: swindling, fraud; embezzlement, and even of those crimes, which are too horrid to name, but which have been committed by so many within these last two or three years. With wretches like these, I was destined by my sentence to dwell for two years; *I, who had never seen the inside of a jail in my life time,* and who, amidst all the temptations of youth, had been eight years in a regular regiment, without ever being in a single instance confined for a moment! One fact will enable the reader to judge of the society I was sentenced to keep for two years. There was a man taken out and sent to Botany Bay, two days after I entered the prison. He was taken out of the same part of the prison, and perhaps out of the very room, in which I was to have slept for two years, if I lived so long. Here was I then sentenced to live for two years amongst felons, and men guilty of unnatural crimes, and to pay a thousand pounds to the king, *aye, to the king,* at the end of that time. I have three sons, and if any one of them ever forgets *this*, may he that instant be ——— not stricken dead, but worse than that, bereft of his senses. *May he become both rotten and mad. May he, after having been a*

* See page 134, Vol. II.

gabbling, slaverling, half-idiot, all the prime of his life, become in his last days loathsome to the sight, and stinking in the nostril. I am, however, not at all afraid, that any child of mine will merit this curse, for they have all been shown the horrid place, where their father was sentenced to be imprisoned, and I am satisfied that nothing more is necessary. From the place and the society here, I was ransomed by my purse; but while I say this, I must beg to be understood, as hinting no complaint against the keeper, who gave up the best part of his house to me, from whom I and my family and friends always received the most civil and kind treatment, and whom I believe to be a very honest and humane man. I can speak from my own knowledge, that he is constantly endeavouring to obtain, and frequently does it, relief and assistance of various sorts for those of his unfortunate prisoners, who stand most in need of it. He is strict in adherence to his rules and regulations, but, I am persuaded, that it would be very difficult to find a more fit man for his situation. Having formed this opinion for two years of actual observation, I think it, now that I am no longer in the power of Mr. Newman, my duty to declare it. During my imprisonment, the conduct of my friends was such, as was naturally to be expected from men, who regarded me as suffering in the public cause. The attentions of all sorts, the acts of real, solid service, were as numerous and great, perhaps, as any man ever received in a like space of time. But the circumstance of this sort, which gave me the most pleasure, was that during the two years, I was visited by persons, whom I had never seen before, from one hundred and ninety-seven cities and towns in England, Scotland, and Ireland, the greatest part of whom came to me as the deputies of some society, club, or circle of people in their respective places of residence. I had the infinite satisfaction to learn from the gentlemen, who thus visited me, that my writings had induced those, who had read them, to think. This fact, indeed, of being visited by persons from almost every considerable town in the kingdom, speaks a language that cannot be misunderstood.

" Within these ten years I have dealt Corruption many a heavy blow ; but, in no two years did I ever deal her so many and such deadly blows as during the two years that I was in Newgate. I am not vain enough to suppose, that it was I who made her reel as she now does ; but, I trust that nobody will deny that I pretty largely contributed towards it. When I compare her state at my coming out of Newgate with her state at my going into Newgate, I see as much difference as I now see in one of the old ewes, which were *'ull-mouthed* at my leaving home. She has been pulled down without violence. She has been *exposed* to a degree that has deprived her of all power longer to deceive. She is, in short, now come to that pass, where neither impudence nor hypocrisy will serve her turn ; where, if she could any longer deceive, it would be of no use to her. The *long faces* of the children and champions of Corruption show us what is passing in their minds. They yet enjoy the fruit of their corrupt practices, but they seem to be in hourly dread of losing them. There is, in this respect, a great change since I was put into Newgate ; and, if I could persuade myself, that my being imprisoned another two years would totally destroy Corruption ; that it would root her and all her infamous brood out of the land, I would cheerfully endure it, taking my chance of foul air and jail distempers.

" As to what has taken place at the expiration of my imprisonment, and to the time of my arrival at Botley, where I now am, it will not be necessary to be very particular. I do not want to have it believed, that I am caressed by the public. I have no ambitious purposes to answer. I am resolved to do all in my power to destroy Corruption in all her branches and all her fibres ; and, to do this, or any thing towards it, I know that I must leave all self-gratifications out of my account. I am aware of this, and Corruption may be assured that I am quite prepared for it. I laugh at all the alarms of ENVY. They are wholly groundless. I only want to see Corruption *destroyed*, without caring a straw who has the honour of doing it. In the desire of seeing this accom-

plished, I overlook all minor considerations. It is, however, due to the nation to state here, for the information of foreigners, that, on the 9th of July, the day on which my imprisonment ceased, I was invited to a grand dinner at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, at which dinner upwards of 600 persons were present, and, which bespoke the character of the whole, SIR FRANCIS BURDETT was in the chair. I have no desire to draw a picture here; no desire to swell out any of the circumstances. The bare fact is enough; that this dinner, as large a one, I believe, as ever was known upon any occasion, even in London, took place in approbation of my writings; and especially in approbation of that particular writing for which I was imprisoned. At this dinner there arose some circumstances not less important than the dinner itself. It was not to be supposed, that such an occasion would pass without an attempt to do something to annoy me. Accordingly it was, in the shape of newspaper paragraphs of the same day, and in the shape of handbills distributed at the door of the Tavern as the gentlemen went in; in vehicles of this sort, it was shown, or asserted,

“ 1st.—That I had, ten years ago, expressed my decided disapprobation of the conduct, and even the principles of Sir Francis Burdett.

“ 2nd,—That, in the time between my conviction and my being brought up to judgment, I formed the design of dropping my Register, to announce which design I had prepared and actually caused to be printed an advertisement.

“ 3rd,—That this design was coupled with a negotiation with the government for making the dropping of the Register a condition upon which forgiveness was to be obtained.

“ 4th,—That this offer on my part having been refused by the government, I next offered to turn about and write for them.

“ 5th,—That on account of this having been rejected, I abandoned the design, and continued the Register.

“ I shall answer these one by one.—As to the first, I had as much right to express my disapprobation of the conduct

and principles of Sir Francis Burdett ten years ago as I have now to express my approbation of them. Whether the change has been produced by *conviction*, or proceeded from some *selfish motive*, the reader must be the judge, though I must say, that I think it would be very difficult to make out the probability of the latter. At any rate, it was impossible that the change should arise out of a desire to get at *any share of the public money*; and that is the great point to keep in view. As to the second, it is perfectly *true*; and, surely, I had a perfect right to cease writing *whenever I pleased*. That man must have but little consideration who does not see many good reasons for my adopting such a course; but, my answer to the charge is this; that I had, and have a right to cease writing whenever I pleased or shall please; and that, if I were to give up this right, I should, while I am endeavouring to ensure freedom to my country, be myself a *slave*. As to the third, fourth and fifth propositions, all that I can say of them is, that they are *FALSE*; that they are wholly destitute of truth; that they have been invented as much as any fairy tale ever was invented; and, indeed, their falsehood is proved by the advertisement itself, which says, that I intended to discontinue the Register; because—what? Why, because I feared, that it would be impossible for me to continue it *WITHOUT SOFTENING MY TONE*. This was stated as the reason; it was so to be stated in print; who, then, will believe either of the three last propositions to contain a single word of truth? Having made this denial, I make it once for all. I shall always insist upon my right to cease writing *whenever I please*; and, while I continue to write, the reader will always be able to judge of the value of what I write. If he finds it useful, he will continue to supply himself with it; if not, he will cease so to do; and thus, he and I shall never be under obligations to each other.

“That I should be pursued with the same envy, hatred, and malice, out of prison that I was pursued with into prison, I *naturally expected*. Had I not been, I should have feared

that I had lost my sting. For all the falsehoods, for all the blows that baseness of all kinds has aimed at me, I have found more than sufficient compensation in the applause of the meeting at the Crown and Anchor; in the cordial reception I met with, upon my return, at Winchester, where there were gentlemen, whom I had never seen, who had come thirty miles to meet me; and, above all, in the kindness, the warmth of affection, with which I was received at Botley, into which the young men of the village (without even a hint from any one belonging to me) drew my carriage from the distance of more than a mile.

“When we got into the village, about nine o'clock in the evening of the 11th July, there was a sight for Sir Vicary Gibbs, and Lord Ellenborough, and his brother judges to see! The inhabitants of the village gathered round me; the young men and the boys, and their fathers and mothers, listened to my account of the *CAUSE* of my absence; hearing me speak of the *local militia* and the *German troops* at the town of Ely; hearing me calling upon fathers and mothers to reflect on what I said, and on their sons to bear in mind to the last hour of their lives. In short, the thing ended precisely as it ought to end, in a plain appeal to the understanding of the inhabitants of a village; to young countrymen and boys, and their fathers and mothers.

“To express my feelings upon this occasion is quite impossible. Suffice it to say, that the good behaviour, the civility and kindness of all the people of the village to my family during my absence; and their most affectionate reception of myself at my return, will never be effaced from my recollection. If there had wanted a motive in me to love my country, here would have been motive sufficient. That nation cannot be otherwise than good, where the inhabitants of a whole parish are so honest, so just, and so kind. For my part, born and bred amongst the farmers and labourers of England, I have entertained towards them feelings of kindness; but, I have now to add the feeling of gratitude, and of

that feeling I shall, I hope, never fail to give proof, when it is in my power to defend any of my poorer neighbours against the oppressions of the more powerful.

Botley, 15th July, 1812.

WILLIAM COBBETT.

Mr. Cobbett had been but a few days liberated from Newgate, when it was proposed to celebrate his liberation by a public dinner at the Crown and Anchor; previously, however, to entering upon the detail of the proceedings of that day, it will be necessary, in order to render some parts of the speech which Cobbett delivered at the dinner intelligible, to notice some very strong and caustic remarks, which appeared against him in the public papers, and particularly in the Times.

On the day on which the dinner was to be held, the 9th July, the following appeared in the Times :

"To the PERSONS, who meet to celebrate MR. COBBETT'S LIBERATION from PRISON, by a DINNER.

"Gentlemen,

"As your purpose is to evince your love for a free press, by dining together on this day, with a supposed martyr in its service, I cannot help thinking, that I am performing an act of the greatest kindness both to you and the press, by shewing that you have chosen a highly irrational occasion of testifying your regard for that greatest of all public blessings. If you had any mark of esteem to bestow on the victims of government prosecutions, the industry of the last Attorney General has unhappily supplied you with a sufficient number, on all of whom you are inflicting the most manifest injustice, by your exclusive selection of one, who, as I shall shortly shew you, would have sold both us, the free press, and himself, to have escaped, or indemnified himself for the late prosecution. If there was any man breathing, from whom the people had a right to expect fidelity in their cause, it was from Mr. Cobbett, for he was the

man, whom, above all others, the people had raised from the lowest poverty to the greatest affluence, by their partiality and attention. He had nothing but what he owed to the people, and yet, as I shall shortly prove to you, generous as that people had been to him, he would have imposed an additional tax upon them, after their antecedent liberality, to pay him for his imprisonment; and next, he would have bought his exemption from that imprisonment, by giving up his Register, and your cause, at once to the government. And this is the patriot, whose release you are met to commemorate.

“Gentlemen, shortly after Mr. Cobbett’s conviction, he put forth a public address, stating what surprised me very much, that many gentlemen ‘had proposed setting on foot a subscription, for the purpose of indemnifying him and his family against the heavy expences and losses which he had incurred.’ Gentlemen, this is an idea which no rational or honourable man, I will venture to say, ever entertained; no rational one, for all such must have known, that though Mr. Cobbett might sustain loss and inconvenience on this particular occasion, yet was he, in the general balance of trade, an infinite gainer; the gainer of Bottleys, the gainer, besides, of some thousands a year, none of which he would have ever had, but for his being a successful dealer in political writing. No honourable man could have thought of subscribing, because all such must have conceived, that an honest Englishman, in easy circumstances, would have considered it as the greatest of all possible insults, to have had a base barter tendered to him by his friends, probably most of them poorer than himself, for their sufferings, in their cause and his own, a cause too, which to him had been so lucrative, and by which they had gained nothing. This being the case, gentlemen, how does Mr. Cobbett receive this supposed proposal of subscribing for him? By one of the meanest and dirtiest suggestions that ever disgraced, I will not say a champion of public freedom, but even an oppressor of it, base and dirty the whole herd of them are. I shall give it in his own

words, extracted from the Register of August 11th, 1810, and which was the last of that work I ever took in.*

"This is Mr. Cobbett's patriotism, gentlemen, and thus it is that he would have converted the cause of freedom, that cause, which has sustained the fainting spirits of many a hungry sufferer, in darkness, in prison, and in bonds, during the atrocious reigns of the Charles's and the second James; thus it is that he would, at the expence too of his own friends, have converted that cause into a sordid provision for his wife and family. O yes! each individual must, to be sure, so *str* himself for Mr. Cobbett, (the poor famished, wretched prisoner, and his injured family) as if the success of the subscription depended wholly on himself. Modest claims of the selfish impostor upon his silly dupes.

"Having thus shown you, gentlemen, how Mr. Cobbett would have cheated you out of your money, to pay him for a prosecution, sustained in a cause, which was no otherwise yours, than as it was his, and which had already paid him well, I shall next proceed to show, what perhaps some of you little think, that he would actually have given up the cause itself, together with his Register, to government, if they would have spared him the pain of suffering a two years imprisonment in its behalf. This is the hero to whose firmness we are to look up when the day of trial comes.

"No sooner was Mr. Cobbett convicted, than he endeavoured to gain the forgiveness of government, and to prevail upon the Attorney General to refrain from calling him up for judgment. There is nothing he would not have betrayed, in order to save himself, I verily believe, had it been *in his power*; he would have sacrificed his wife and children, on whom he had modestly called upon you to settle a pension for that end, at least I shall show you that he would have sacrificed his Journal, which had been the support of *his wife and children*, and as Shylock says,

"You take their life
When you do take the means whereby they live."

* For this address of Cobbett to the readers of the Register, see page 152.

“The following are the words of an advertisement, which he actually got ready and printed, at a time, when he erroneously thought he had made his peace with ministers; and after the production of this address, the penning and printing of which, upon the supposition I have imputed to him, he dares not deny, I think there are few friends of liberty and a free press, who will not turn from such a supporter of them with disgust, and choose to celebrate some other era, rather than the release of this man from a prison, which he had in truth merited for his whole life, by the selfish and unmanly acts, which he used to escape it, or to pay himself for it.

TO THE READERS OF THE REGISTER.

“As I never have *written merely for the sake of gain*, and as I have always held it to be a base act, to write upon political subjects, or, more correctly speaking, to take a part in the war of politics, merely with the view to emolument, or the means of a livelihood, I cannot, of course, after what has taken place, think it proper, let the pecuniary loss be what it may, to continue any longer this publication, and, therefore, with this present number, which also concludes the volume, *I put an end to it for ever*. I hardly think that any statement of my reasons for doing this can be necessary to any body, for it must be manifest, that if the work were continued, *it could not be what it has been*, and of course it could no longer meet with the approbation of those by whom it has hitherto been approved of. It is manifest, that if continued, it must take quite a new tone and manner; nay, that its matter must also be changed, that in short, it must be totally different *to* (from) what it has hitherto been, and, therefore, those who have most highly valued its existence, must of course be the most desirous that it should now cease to exist.

“I know that there will nevertheless be enough persons to say that I have *deserted the cause*, but I shall ask whose cause? It is, I presume, meant, the cause of *the public*, or *the people*, or *the country*, give it what name you please. Well, if the putting a stop to this work be an injury to the

country, let it be recollected that it *is the country itself* who have condemned me."

"Thus, then, it is, Gentlemen, that he has every way betrayed us. He would have pensioned his wife and family upon us by a subscription for his old work, though it was by that work, that himself, his wife, and family had been wholly maintained and enriched, and then he would have given up that work, and the cause which it so advantageously sustained, in order to escape prosecution; so that either in the desertion or maintenance of patriotism, it is clear that he has nothing but gain in view, as far as he can obtain it with personal safety; and earnestly do I caution our well-tryed friend, Sir Francis Burdett, against longer lending his valuable and untainted name to the support of such dupery.

(Signed,)

FROM A FELLOW SUFFERER UNDER
UNJUST PROSECUTION."

The charges brought forward against Cobbett, in the foregoing letter, were of too grave and serious a nature to pass unnoticed. In the estimation of the public, he had fallen some degrees, in consequence of the bargain which he wished to make with them, respecting the purchase of his Registers; and the apparently authentic statement of his disposition to suspend the publication of his Register, for the purchase of his freedom, and the remission of the fine, had raised up against him a host of enemies in certain quarters, where formerly he had found the staunchest friends. These circumstances imparted a degree of interest to the approaching dinner at the Crown and Anchor, as it was known that Mr. Cobbett would be there publicly accused of the above-mentioned acts, and great anxiety was manifested to hear his explanation.

Thursday, the 9th of July, was the day appointed for the dinner, and as early as three o'clock, the company began to assemble, and at four the doors of the great room were

thrown open, and all the tables immediately afterwards filled. By five o'clock no admission to the apartment could be obtained, and a very large proportion were accommodated in adjoining rooms. The dinner was served up at five o'clock, and shortly afterwards Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Cobbett, Major Cartwright, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bosville, Aldermen Wood and Goodbehere, Sir William Rawlins, Mr. Waithman, Mr. Fawkes, with many other gentlemen, preceded by the Stewards, entered the room, and were received with reiterated plaudits by the whole company.

On the removal of the cloth, after some preliminary toasts, Sir Francis Burdett proposed,

"Our sincere Congratulations on the release of that able advocate of Parliamentary Reform, and zealous opposer of the Flogging System, WILLIAM COBBETT."

Which being drank in the usual complimentary manner, Mr. COBBETT rose and spoke as follows—Gentlemen, unused as I am to speak in public, I should have contented myself on the present occasion with returning you my sincere thanks for the honour you have this day conferred upon me, and more particularly for the warm expression of your approbation of those principles, for the maintenance of which I have been so severely punished. This much is all I intended to have said; but while I was in the country this morning, and at my entrance into this room, The Times newspaper was put into my hand, together with another paper, which has been industriously distributed, and which you have, doubtless, all seen.* Some severe accusations are there brought against me, and surely the government, after having confined me for two years in a felon's jail, having compelled me to pay a fine of £1000, and to provide sureties for seven years, in the sum of £5000, might have permitted me to receive your congratulations, without attempting to wound my reputation with such calumnies, or attempts at calumnies, as you have recently perused.—(*Applause!*) The

* Various contradictory extracts from Mr. Cobbett's works.

source whence these attacks proceed, no one can doubt, and I need not require you to reflect for a moment in passing your judgment upon this sort of criticism, which only amounts to informing you, that ten years ago I had the boldness (a great boldness it was) in harsh language, to express opinions regarding the man who now has the honour to sit in the chair, different from those which I now entertain. In doing so, I exercised only a right for which I have been always contending : that right which you are now assembled to sanction.—(*Loud cheers !*)—But supposing that I was wrong, as I have since fairly and candidly acknowledged my error—(*hear, hear !*)—where, I may ask, is there a man in the world, who, at some time or other, has not found it necessary to change his sentiments ? out of what do our settled opinions arise ; but reflection, discussion, and observation, and what is to produce these settled opinions, but time ? I have confessed the change fully and openly ; and I entreat you always to bear this in mind, that alteration of sentiment is not to be ascribed as a demerit to any man, unless it be discovered, that there lurk some suspicions that he has altered his sentiments from self-interested motives.—(*Repeated applauses.*) I am very certain that neither friend nor enemy will deny, that in changing my opinion regarding the honourable baronet's politics, I did not consult my interests, (*hear !*)—The paper to which I have before alluded, also gives me occasion to observe, that while in the clearest manner, it demonstrates the unmanly malignity and malevolent revenge of those who published, probably at your expence, (*loud shouts,*) it also establishes beyond the possibility of controversy, the honour that is due to your chairman. He did not require to be told that ten years ago my opinions were different. I then treated him with undeserved severity, and in what an amiable light does he now appear, and how provoked are his antagonists, while they behold him maintaining, not the man, but the principle (*continued plaudits*).

“With respect to the other publication to which I have alluded, in the Times newspaper, and which you have pro-

bably read, I only think it proper to declare, that the whole of it, as far as it accuses me of any slavish and corrupt act or motive, is a tissue of falsehood. (*hear, hear!*) The advertisement therein inserted, I had sent for insertion in the Register, a short time before I was sent to prison. It expresses my design not to continue the publication of the Register; because, what?—Not because I repented any thing I had done or said, but because I was apprehensive that I could not exercise the same liberty I had heretofore enjoyed, and because I would not consent to lower the tone I had heretofore held. (*Repeated cheers.*) The substance of that advertisement is the same as I had intended to have published in the newspapers; it was written on Wednesday (I beg you to bear the dates in mind,) at Botley, seventy miles distant, and was transmitted from thence to London. After it had been put into the post, on reflection by Mr. Finnerty and myself (who was with me, and will bear testimony to the truth of my statement,) we determined on the following day, that since it might be construed into an abandonment of the cause, it would be better that it should not be inserted, at least until the court of King's Bench had pronounced upon me the sentence it chose to inflict. On Thursday, therefore, it was resolved that Mr. Finnerty should proceed to London to stop the publication, as no answer could be received in time by the post. He did so; so that it is impossible that my conduct could have been influenced by any considerations of the consequences that might result to my person or property.

“Being now upon my legs, as many gentlemen from the country may be present, I shall do what I had not at first intended, viz. state to you some circumstances respecting the nature of the punishment inflicted upon me. In the first place, it was two years' imprisonment; but it is not mere confinement in a house, but imprisonment with the most degraded felons, unless you can redeem yourself from their society at an enormous price: two years' imprisonment means being shut up for that time in a place, with a yard of

35 one way, and about 25 feet the other, to which belong a number of rooms, having the appearance of, and being in reality cells, in each of which are four or five beds, with as many persons as they will hold, consisting, not of persons guilty of libels, or of similar offences, but of persons convicted of felony and misdemeanours, even those who have been found guilty of unnatural crimes. Such is the situation to which I was destined to be sent by the 'Court of King's Bench, and where our venerable friend, Major Cartwright, first visited me. Here were also to be found Aslett, and a man who was transported to Botany Bay the ensuing morning; so that, had I not redeemed myself from this society by my purse, I should for two years have been confined with the most abandoned felons (*Loud applause*). It is not, therefore, absolutely a bed of roses to which they send a man, when he goes to Newgate (*Laughter*). Mr. Eaton is now confined there. He is sentenced to be there imprisoned for twenty-two months, and to stand once on the pillory. In the same place, since I was in Newgate, was a man found guilty of an unnatural crime, who was sentenced to stand once in the pillory, and to be imprisoned only twelve months (*Reiterated shouts*)—such is the equality in the distribution of justice. I mention this fact that the case of Mr. Eaton may particularly attract your notice (*Hear, hear!*) Having said so much, I will not further trespass upon your time: I shall only conclude by observing, that if I wanted any tie to bind me faster to the cause of liberty, that motive, I trust, would be found in the gratitude I shall always feel for the honour you have done me."

Mr. Cobbett sat down amidst shouts of applause that shook the apartment for some minutes.

Mr. Graves, in a short speech, proposed the following toast, which was drank with most enthusiastic clamour:

"**May the Servants of the People be prevented from becoming their Masters, by that Radical Reform, proposed by that firm opposer of undefined privilege—SIR FRANCIS BURDETT.**"

Sir F. Burdett rose and stood for some minutes upon the table, unable to procure a hearing from the rapturous applauses with which he was greeted. When silence had been procured, the honourable baronet observed, that it frequently fell to his lot to address the assembly alluded to in the sentiment just drank, which justly deprecated the presumption of those who ought to be the servants of the people, in erecting themselves into their masters. This sort of scene of "*High Life below Stairs*," he had often witnessed, but never without opposing such unjustifiable usurpation of power, and endeavouring to prove that the rights of the people were consistent with, and necessary to the interests and prerogatives of the crown. On this day the company had, in the first place, to congratulate Mr. Cobbett on his enfranchisement—a man whose merits were so well understood, that praise was now superfluous; whose pen was too powerful an instrument not to make a due impression on the public mind; and who, notwithstanding the unhandsome attack made upon him, would, the honourable baronet trusted, always stand the test of public opinion (*Hear, hear!*)—It was impossible for any man, or any tribunal of Englishmen, to reflect upon the subject which had immured Mr. Cobbett in a jail, without horror; and he thought, that instead of being punished by the imprisonment he had so meritoriously endured, he should have been rewarded with a civic crown, for his exertions against a system, which was literally *the scourge* of the nation (*Applauses*).—In the next place, the company would observe, that that gentleman had put upon its true footing the principle of the meeting, free discussion and a love for truth, on which alone we could depend, that we might in reality be a boasted and not a boasting nation. To free discussion, we should in all probability be indebted for the restoration of the temple of liberty from the ruins of the constitution, with which Corruption had nearly smothered it. The truest test of the state of freedom in a nation, was the freedom that was allowed to discussion (*Loud cheers*).—It was the best mode of enlightening the public mind—of giving it the nourish-

ment required for the invigoration of the tree of liberty. Without it, a people was not only enslaved, but likely to continue slaves; with it, sanguine hopes might yet be indulged of shaking corruption to its basis (*Hear*). Whether the Report of the Secret Committee, which only that day had appeared, would generate any of those prolific monsters which had before been seen to issue from sealed bags and boxes, he could not tell, for ministers had studiously kept it a secret, not only from the public, but even from themselves, though as early as to-morrow they would be called upon to make up their determination; but of this he was certain, that the great enemy to free discussion, was the notoriously and confessedly unconstitutional power usurped by the King's Attorney, of filing informations *ex officio* (*Repeated cheers*). It was a power assumed without reason or common sense, against positive law, which enabled a man, at will, to punish another for an undefinable offence; for such, he contended, a libel to be. Gentlemen would recollect also what sort of a thing a trial was, when the king named the judges (*Hear*). King James, when he came to the throne, inquired what power he should have, and being informed that he had the nomination of the bishops and judges, he declared that he could have such law and such gospel as he pleased (*A laugh*). The assertion was now very nearly verified, in contempt of what were called the barbarous opinions of our rude and uncivilized ancestors, who had said, that an Englishman's life and fortune should depend upon his country alone, for which purpose the *Trial by Jury* had been established. This institution was at present almost annihilated by the assumption of the King's Attorney General, and by the usurpation of the Master of the Crown Office, who had the power of selecting the Jury (*Cheering*). Even Judge Blackstone, formerly considered a servile court lawyer, had condemned the issue of *ex officio informations*, excepting in cases where the public safety was immediately endangered, and now by some strange perversion was called a Jacobinical writer (*Hear, hear*). A libel by no ingenuity could be converted into an offence imme-

diately endangering the safety of the state. To talk of free discussion now, was a mere mockery! In ancient history a tyrant was mentioned, who had manufactured a brazen bull, and when a fire was lighted under it, and a criminal put in the inside of it, the king amused himself with hearing the bull roar. We were in a worse condition: we were not even allowed the privilege of roaring in our pain (*Laughter*). Another tyrant, whose name blackened the page of history, had an iron bedstead made of a certain length, upon which, we were told, that he had men laid down, and if they were too short, their limbs were stretched to the proper length, and if too tall, their extremities were proportionably shortened by amputation. Such was the attempt of the enemies of a free press at the present moment, reducing the sentiments of all men to their own arbitrary standard (*Loud bursts of applause*). Inhumanity and absurdity in this enlightened age were carried even further than in the days of Dionysius. That such a state of things ought not to continue, none would deny; and Mr. Cobbett had truly stated, that he had constitutionally a right to express freely his opinion of any public man or measure, and in the exercise of that privilege, he had thought fit to blame him (Sir F. Burdett). If, too, he found the sentiments he formerly entertained, not justified by future experience, he had not only a right, but it was his duty to avow his change of opinion.

All, the honourable baronet observed, which the friends to the principles of the present meeting wished, was fair discussion. They asked but a plain Englishman's demand, "A clear stage and no favour." They were met here to-day, not only to congratulate the gentleman on his (Sir F. Burdett's) right hand on his liberation, but also to express their opinion as to the sufficiency of the Common Law of the land to protect individuals and the public, without the aid of *ex officio* informations, and on the authority of that Common Law, that where a man was to be punished in purse, he was not also to be punished in person, unless for an atrocious act. There was no court in which such a principle had been tole-

rated, except the Court of Star Chamber, and other courts of the same kind, and the mere entertaining of such principles had been the downfall of all such courts. Till late years, from the time of the Star Chamber, no such punishments as those to which he had alluded had been thought of; and if nothing intervened to prevent it, he was afraid that the infliction of such punishments would do much to take away the credit which it was necessary the Court of King's Bench should possess. It was necessary that the credit of the Court of King's Bench should be upheld, but, he was satisfied, that this would most effectually be accomplished by the maintenance of justice and moderation. If the credit of this, or of any other court, however, was to be held up, this must not be attempted to be done contrary to truth, nor could it be accomplished by resorting to oppression. It was an axiom in this country, which he hoped never to see disputed, that discussion should be like the air—free. If mischief was at any time done to any man, the law was free, and would afford him ample relief, without the resorting to *ex officio* informations. When they stood up as advocates for the liberty of the press, they did not stand up for calumniators, but they stood up in support of free discussion. Free discussion was the life and soul, or rather it was the evidence of the very existence of freedom. He who could, and would enter upon it, might do so, if he chose to run the risk; he who would not, might hold his peace. As matters now stood, however, to adventure upon discussion with impunity was hardly possible. One might be found, who, like Daniel, would be ready to consent to be thrown into the den of lions, rather than forego his opinions—but he could not, like Daniel, have any chance of escaping. Few, if any ever escaped, who came into the hands of the Attorney General in modern times. Could any man doubt this, when it was seen that the gentleman next him, whose liberation they had met that day to celebrate, had been imprisoned, fined, &c., merely for decrying the practice of calling a man from the plough to have his flesh torn from his bones; and this too in the presence of German

troops, whose mere appearance in this land, in former times, would have been enough to have converted the whole country into a forest of arms. The honourable gentleman to whom he had alluded, however, was not to be deterred even by such a punishment. He knew how little he was, compared with the country. He reflected on the dignity of his mind; and considered that though he might even fall in the cause, like a Sidney or a Russell, no man of feeling could consider his as a lot to be avoided, but rather as one to be envied. He said what he did now, not with the view of calling the attention of the meeting to the case of Mr. Cobbett, but to that of Mr. Eaton, who, after great sufferings, was now, at an advanced age, a prisoner in Newgate, suffering for a crime, which when compared with others was as nothing. He hoped on some future occasion, something might be done to relieve this unfortunate man, and trusted he would feel an advocate in every breast. The honourable baronet concluded, by expressing a hope that he should always merit the reception he had met with this day; he should be sorry not to receive it; and he was determined always to deserve it.

The speech was received throughout with bursts of applause.

The chairman then proposed as a sentiment:—

“A revision of the Penal Code—may it be rendered more severe against public depredators, and less severe against starving manufacturers.”

After a song from a gentleman of the name of Wright—the chairman gave:—

“Civil and religious Liberty all over the world.”

The Rev. Mr. Nightingale then addressed the meeting, declaring that it would be found to be a never failing observation, that enemies to religious liberty were enemies to civil liberty also. As a Christian too, he must protest against the unchristian punishment inflicted on Mr. Eaton.

A gentleman then rose in the centre of the room, entreated the indulgence of the company, although he had no claim to it, but as a sincere and ardent friend to the principles on which the meeting was assembled. He said that Mr. Cobbett

had complained of malignant enemies, and he was anxious that they should not be repeated. On this account, he begged to call his attention to the publication to which Mr. Cobbett had alluded, *The Times* newspaper, which contained two distinct charges, to neither of which a satisfactory reply had been yet given ; 1st. That Mr. Cobbett unworthily and indirectly attempted to raise a sum of money from the public, to defray the expences of his trial, when the public had already enabled him fully to sustain them. 2nd. That he had offered to discontinue his *Register*, for the purpose of inducing the Court of King's Bench to mitigate the sentence they were about to pass upon him. The speaker's object was, that no further attacks should be made, on the ground that Mr. Cobbett had offered no contradiction, although it might still be urged by the venal writers of *The Times*, that

"If their purgation did consist in words,

"They are as innocent as grace itself."

At least, however, he wished the accusations to be denied, although there were some now in high situations under government, who had not deemed it necessary to acquit themselves from heinous charges even by "purgation of words."

Mr. Cobbett immediately rose. He said the gentleman had alluded to the article which he (Mr. Cobbett) had already noticed as having appeared in *The Times* newspaper of this day ; and had looked on it as containing two accusations, which, in his opinion, ought to be refuted and rebutted by him (Mr. Cobbett) at this meeting. In candour, he thought the questions should have been put to him before this day, and that he should not have been deprived of the same medium of answering the charges as had been employed against him. He did not know, if the gentleman who had just spoken, was author of the article in question ; but, unquestionably, in that article having appeared for the first time this morning, he (Mr. Cobbett) was deprived of the advantage of meeting the charges in writing. He was, as the gentleman who had just spoken, conceived it, accused of two

charges :—First, that he had not agreed to an open subscription, but that he had contrived to accomplish the same object in an indirect way. How, he would ask, had he done this?—Why, by advertising for sale a certain number of books which he had printed, which he then had in his possession, and which he all along intended for sale. The fact was, a subscription had been proposed to him, but he had declined it. He hoped there was nothing offensive in this. But when he had in his hands many sets of the same Register, for which he had been prosecuted, was it unreasonable that he should call the attention of his friends to this circumstance, and should offer them for sale? The gentleman who had just sat down had maintained, that he (Mr. Cobbett) had realized property sufficient to indemnify him for all his losses! Did he therefore, mean to say, that he ought not to have offered his books for sale? If he had somewhat more property than that which was to be taken from him, had he not, on that account, a right to that which he possessed? He had never in his life, though he had been repeatedly offered it, received a single farthing of the public money. He had never received nor solicited a favour for himself or any of his friends. What he had, therefore, he conceived belonged to himself. That he was not so poor as some persons, against whom *ex officio* informations had been filed, he admitted. That, however, some persons might be inclined to think partook of a degree of merit in him. He had risen from the rank of a private soldier in the army, and after serving his country for eight years in that capacity, and having learned to love the persons whom he had recently observed had been ill treated, he had, from that situation, been enabled by the exertion of his own mind, to realize any property which he now possessed. He thanked no man for this, not even the public. He did not even say in his advertisement, that he would thank any one who would buy his books. But if he had a right to sell his own property, he presumed to think he had answered this part of the charge.—The second charge was, that after the conviction in the Court of King's Bench he had intended to

give up the publication of the Register. This he had already explained.—He surely had a right to discontinue his Register, if he inclined. He had not contracted with the public to continue it for any particular period. Supposing he had made, according to his own ideas, a sufficient sum of money to enable him to cease from labouring any farther, surely he had a right to do so. The bare circumstance of his discontinuing his publication, therefore, could have nothing in it whatever. If he had, indeed, made it a condition of his punishment being remitted or mitigated—if he had made a proposition agreeing to discontinue his Register, if the Attorney General would remit his punishment; or if he had even acceded to such a proposition when made to him, then he would have abandoned his principles. This, however, he utterly denied. He denied distinctly that he ever had made such a proposition—that such a proposition had ever been made to him—that he had ever entertained such an idea—or had ever thought of it.

The gentleman who had called up Mr. Cobbett, again rose; but the tumult occasioned by those who wished him to be heard, and by those who wished to prevent him, was so great as to render it impossible to distinguish a single word.

Sir Francis Burdett came forward, and recalled to the recollection of the meeting, that they were here assembled in support of the right of free and impartial discussion. He was sure, therefore, he needed not put in a plea of equity in favour of every person who wished to address them. Here there was no packed jury—no sham representation.—He could not doubt therefore that every one would receive an impartial hearing.—At the same time, he hoped, that no man would come to this meeting to fight in armour. Mr. Cobbett was a marked object, he was open to the attack of every one, it was but fair, however, that those who attacked him should be known. This seemed to him to be but equal justice.

The gentleman again rose and said, that although he was not anxious for public notoriety, and although he disputed the right of the honorable baronet to make the call upon him, he

had no objection distinctly to state to the meeting, that his name was Collier. He assured the company that they had misapprehended his intention; all he wished was that calumny should be distinctly refuted, and he was happy to hear the direct negative put upon the charges by Mr. Cobbett. As the accusation had been public, so he wished the vindication to be public also. He could not agree with the assertion of Mr. Cobbett, that he had a right to discontinue his register at pleasure, because he had gained a competence; if the cause in which that publication had been employed, were good, and if its support in any degree depended upon it, it was a duty that he owed to the cause to persist in it. He denied that he was the author of the calumny published in the *Times*, and apologized to the company for having detained them, but he thought that they were indebted even to him, who had been the insignificant instrument of producing an explanation from Mr. Cobbett.

About half-past nine o'clock, Sir F. Burdett left the chair, and the company began to disperse.

A publication, titled—"Mr Cobbett to the people of England," containing extracts from the earlier numbers of the Political Register, at a time when Mr. Cobbett's sentiments were not exactly what they had been for some time, was distributed with considerable industry at the door; but not content with this mode of giving it publicity, the propagator was at the trouble, after the meeting had assembled, and just as dinner was removing, to have copies of the publication sealed up and directed to the different stewards, and put into their hands.

Notwithstanding the prompt and unequivocal denial on the part of Cobbett, of any and all the charges which had been brought against him by some individuals, and which were most industriously circulated in the immediate vicinity of the Crown and Anchor, still his justification was not considered by many so complete, as to abolish all suspicion that might attach to his character, were any of the alleged charges to have been substantiated against him. It is true that Cobbett in his

Register of the following week laboured most industriously to prove that his anonymous opponent was both a blackguard and a liar, certainly it must be allowed, if vulgar abuse, and scurrility, unbounded crimination, low invective and ribaldry could carry off the victory, no doubt whatever could exist, that Cobbett richly earned it. On the other hand, his opponent met him with the following strong statement, which for some reasons, best known to himself, Cobbett did not condescend to take any notice of. It appeared in the Times of the 23rd July, and was addressed,

**"TO THE FRIENDS OF THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS,
LATELY ASSEMBLED AT THE CROWN AND ANCHOR, ON
THE RELEASE OF MR. COBBETT FROM NEWGATE.**

" Gentlemen.

" You now, so far as I can learn, are of opinion, that I have ' put Mr. Cobbett down,' or rather wholly to vary the phrase, that I have held him up to you in his proper colours, as a coward and double apostate, and that hence, he has fallen of himself. I must, however, yet bestow a few words upon his last letter. How altered is his tone; Gentlemen! How mean and abject is detected guilt! He makes no reply to any part of my charge, or rather of your charge, with respect to his bartering the continuance of his Register for his exemption from punishment, but instead of this, he invents and denies a wholly fictitious accusation, namely, that ' he offered to turn about and write for government,' whereas, Gentlemen, you know we never accused him of any such thing, I only said in my last, that some of the members of government, when they saw that he was in such a fright, suggested that he might be induced to write for them, but that others replied, ' he had changed too often already, and was not worth a louse to them.' And yet, Gentlemen, with all his meanness, he is not very modest, for observe you, he who would thus have betrayed the cause of freedom, rather than enter the doors of a prison, has the effrontery to tell you that he, yes he, even after this shameful apostacy, had contributed

very much to the fall of corruption. Oh! sirs, if corruption had no more hardy champion to encounter than this mercenary in our service; this runaway from his ranks, then might she indeed triumph. Neither does he, I observe in his last letter, now pretend to have any principle in him, or to have in the least degree his heart in the cause. He only says, if the reader thinks there is value in his writings, he ought to purchase them. No, Gentlemen, there was value in Pitt's speeches, there is value even in old George Rose's, but what we want are men, not words.

"That Mr. Cobbett's conduct is without example I will not say, for the great master of human life has excellently drawn it in his character of Parolles, in the play of 'All's well that ends well,' and whoever would see an exact parallel of the manner in which that said Parolles proceeded when he was captured by his supposed enemy, in the recovery of his drum; read, Gentlemen, read act IV. scene III. of the play above cited, beginning at the words put in Parolles mouth, so similar in meaning to Mr. Cobbett's address, 'I will confess what I know without constraint, if ye pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more.'

"As to the insolence with which Mr. Cobbett treats Sir Francis Burdett, declaring that he had as great a right to abuse him ten years ago, as he has to praise him now: I shall certainly concede that right to such a man as Mr. Cobbett, and do verily believe, that *before other ten years are over, he will be abusing him again as much as ever*,* But to you, Gentlemen, it is unnecessary to say, that the conduct of Sir Francis Burdett, was the same ten years ago as it is now, and as much entitled to the praise of every honest man.

"The nastiness which he talks about his son's slaving and stinking, can only excite the contempt of even that young man himself, but while Mr. Cobbett was reminding his family so forcibly, that they had lost a thousand pounds

* This prediction was actually verified.

in our cause, surely gratitude should likewise prompt them to remember, that they have gained, perhaps, other forty thousand by it, so that the concern which their head would have betrayed, has been a lucrative one to them.

"And now adieu, Mr. Cobbett. He has been the worst enemy we ever met with, because his timidity has caused our adversaries to think, that we shall all be found like him, when the time of trial comes, so that his act has, in truth, slandered the whole of us. It becomes, therefore, a duty which we owe ourselves to cast him off, as indeed we have, and sincerely do I hope and believe, that the next who is called upon to suffer for the cause of freedom, and the liberty of the press, will wipe away by his manly fortitude the shame resulting from one base example.

"I am, Gentlemen, &c.

"A SUFFERER BY UNJUST PROSECUTION."

The controversy, if it may be so called, here stopped between Mr. Cobbett, and his anonymous opponent; who, if "the last word," be significative of victory, may certainly *lay claim* to it. The egotism of Cobbett, however, shortly broke out afresh in the pompous and inflated account which *he sent for insertion in the Statesman, of his triumphant entry into Botley, and which he afterwards inserted in his Register, and from which the public were led to believe, that Cobbett himself had not even given a hint to any one belonging to him, of his desire to be drawn into Botley, and that the whole proceedings were the spontaneous efforts of the people of Botley, stimulated by an enthusiastic regard for him, personally and politically. Cobbett further endeavoured to show, that the honours thus paid him, were forced upon him; that they were, in fact, irksome and disagreeable to him, and that his greatest and proudest satisfaction was in having suffered in the cause of freedom.*

Unfortunately, however, for Mr. Cobbett, there were some persons who were not to be made the dupes of his inflated panegyrics upon himself, and who unhesitatingly published

an account of the whole affair, which gave the triumphant entry into Botley rather a different aspect, than Cobbett wished or intended that it should bear. The following is the account of the getting up of the triumphant entry, as published in the Times newspaper, and we find the same corroborated in other quarters.

“Some days previously to Mr. Cobbett's return to Botley, a person, who resides therein, and *who has frequently been the agent of Mr. Cobbett*, both before, and especially during his absence from Botley, interested himself particularly in making preparations for celebrating the return of Mr. Cobbett. By way of enlisting a number of idle fellows in the drama that was to be acted, he proclaimed, ‘by beat of drum,’ that four half-hogsheads of beer should be given away in the village, on Mr. Cobbett's return. There was a paucity of musicians in the village, not a violin was to be had, but after canvassing the abodes of the villagers, wherever ‘the concord of sweet sounds’ had been accidentally heard, two clarionets were obtained, and fortunately a time drum was obtained, to increase the grandeur of the wind instruments. In the village was a benefit club society, who were wont, on the anniversary of their foundation, to parade the town, eke with the clarionets and drum, preceded by their colours, on which the heraldic honours, and other effigies of the society were richly emblazoned. These colours, were deposited with the person who kept the principal inn, or public house in the village, and who, in the processions of the society, enjoyed the honour of bearing the colours before his brethren, to the no small gratification and admiration of the ladies of the village, who displayed their elegant forms, and fashionable attire from the open casements of the windows, congratulating themselves with the view of the stately and martial air which their brothers or their lovers assumed in the ranks of the society. In the ardour of his enthusiasm, the agent of Mr. Cobbett, without consulting the committee of the society, directed the landlord of the inn, to project the colours of the society from one of his windows, and as Boni-

face saw that some profit would most likely accrue to him, by the display of the colours, thereby making his house a kind of head quarters of the victorious party, he testified no objection to the colours being displayed on the occasion, although during the day, some very unpleasant insinuations reached his ears, that he had without any authority made use of what was not his own, and that the colours of the society were disgraced by the use to which they were applied. 'Mine host,' was, however, not only called upon to display the colours, but he had also a very prominent station appointed to him in the procession; which, not being regulated upon the general principle, that the most important personage walks the last, was so ordered, that the landlord should walk the first in the procession, decorated with any coloured ribands, which his wife, the worthy landlady might possess, so that they were not too much faded by an excess of wear. In the church of Botley, as in most other churches, there was a belfry, and this belfry, not like the belfries of some other churches, had four bells in it, the ringing of which did not require any great knowledge of the science of campanology, for as they were not made to harmonize in their tone, the ringers of Botley knew very little of grand-sire cators, or treble bob majors. Nevertheless, amongst the enlightened people of England, the clashing of bells has always been considered as a direct manifestation of joy, whether it be for a wedding or a bloody victory, at which a few thousand human creatures have been massacred, and the greater the number, the greater is the clashing of the bells. The return of Mr. Cobbett, after his dreadful sufferings in the cause of the people, was no doubt a most joyous event, and therefore 'the youths,' of Botley were applied to, to clash the bells, for it could not be called ringing a peal, to celebrate the auspicious event, the said youths being promised their due proportion of the four half hogsheads of ale which were to be distributed on the occasion. There were, however, some persons in the village, of staid and sober habits, who could not be made to understand what sufferings Cobbett had endured, or if endured, whether

he had not richly deserved them : and further, who were so stiffly starched with loyalty, and adherence to the ministers of the day, of whatever principles they might be, that they objected to hold any converse with men of Cobbett's stamp, who, they prognosticated, would ultimately bring ruin on the country. Amongst those individuals was the rector of the parish, to whom the ringers had to apply for the keys of the belfry, but who very unceremoniously informed them, that the bells of his church should not be rung upon any such occasion ; that if his parishioners felt no objection to make fools of themselves, he had a most decided one, and therefore he would not, by delivering up the keys of the belfry, be said to give his sanction to the tom foolery, which was then getting up. In vain did the ringers urge to the rector their loss in a pecuniary point of view, their great deduction in the quantity of the beer which would otherwise be allotted to them ; in vain did they broadly hint to the rector that the time might not be far distant, when he might require their services on the occurrence of some great national event, or even at the happy accouchement of his lady, which was shortly expected to take place, and then, in remembrance of their present disappointment, they might refuse to ring at all ; still the rector was inexorable, the bells should not be rung, and as to their threat of not celebrating the accouchement of his lady, he thought his wife and child would do better without their noise than with it. Thus a very important part of the pageant was, through the qualms of the rector, utterly abolished. The English people are well known in many instances to make beasts of themselves, and under no circumstances do they show that propensity in a more degrading manner, than when they unharness the beasts from a carriage and assume their places. Thus, according to the opinion of Mr. Cobbett's agent, the farce would not be complete, unless the young men of Botley travelled about three miles on the London road, and immediately on meeting the carriage of Mr. Cobbett, to harness themselves to it, and drag him in triumph to his residence at Botley. Strange to say, however

the agent did not find the young men of Botley quite so pliant and tractable as he could wish. The dog days had set in; the weather was hot and sultry; they should be smothered with dust; they might be trampled under foot, and a variety of other excuses were made, evidently showing that the dragging of Mr. Cobbett was not exactly congenial with their tastes. The agent, however, had one strong and forcible argument against them, and which few of them could withstand. He enlarged in *flowing* language on the strength and flavour of the four half hogsheads of ale, that were to be given away, and he declared it to be a *sine qua non*, that they who refused to drag should not be allowed to drink. An immediate change took place in the sentiments of the Botley youths, if the weather were hot and the roads dusty, the ale would amply remedy those evils, and as the agent had informed them that Mr. Cobbett had suffered *greatly* on their account, they surely could not refuse to suffer a little on his. Whatever might have been the force of the latter part of his argument, it is impossible to say, but the former part of it had such an overpowering force, that no further objection was made by the youths of Botley, to take upon themselves, for a time, the character of beasts; although at the same time, there were many residents of Botley, who very indecorously and unpolitely made the remark, that they did not know which was the greatest beast, he who dragged, or he who was dragged. The important point of the dragging being settled, a report was promulgated that Mr. Cobbett was to dine at Winchester, but from what quarter that report originated, or the authority on which it was circulated, was a problem too difficult for many of the Botley people to solve; nevertheless it was at first gently hinted at by the agent, that it would be only paying Mr. Cobbett that respect which his sufferings entitled him to receive from them, if a *body of* the parishioners of Botley were to set forth towards Winchester, and meet Mr. Cobbett at dinner: on the principle that as Mr. Cobbett was undoubtedly the lion of the day, and as the people in London flock in crowds to see the lions eat

at the Zoological Gardens, it would only be consistent with the character of the people of Botley, if they would go to Winchester to see their own great lion eat his dinner. This suggestion was looked upon as coming rather too close to an extravagance, for although they had some secret consciousness that the whole of the affair was nothing but a farce, yet they did not wish to be brought into such a dilemma, in which they would be obliged to make downright fools of themselves. The project of going to Winchester to see Mr. Cobbett eat his dinner was, therefore, very wisely and prudently abandoned, on the principle that many people take upon themselves the merit and the wisdom of abandoning a project, when they find that they cannot possibly carry it into execution. Mr. Cobbett, therefore, finished his dinner at Winchester, without any molestation on the part of the good people of Botley; and on Saturday evening, July 11th, exactly at eight o'clock, the landlord of the inn, with the emblazoned colours of the benefit club, preceded by the two clarionets and drums as aforesaid, sallied forth to meet Mr. Cobbett, and at his heels were a number of boys, girls, and the mothers of the same, all well taught and disciplined to join in a loud huzza, whenever the signal was given by the busy and officious agent of Mr. Cobbett. It was, however, remarked, that on this occasion, Botley appeared to have poured out the dregs of its population, for not a single person of respectability, mechanic or labourer, joined in the procession. Mr. Cobbett was met about a mile from Botley in a landau; and on the appointed signal being given, the boys gave a loud huzza, and the disappointed ringers, and a set of idle dissolute young fellows, whose principal resort is the ale house, proceeded to unharness the horses, and having taken the place of the beasts, they dragged the carriage with its valuable contents down to the front of the agent's house, where Mr. Cobbett harangued the motley group before him, whom the novelty of the scene had attracted to the spot, in a speech replete with self-panegyric and egotism, in its most comprehensive sense—the agent ever and anon huzzing,

and exclaiming, "*There, my boys, what do you say to that?*" This first act of the farce being concluded, the second commenced by drawing Mr. Cobbett to his own house, when the promised four half hogsheads of ale were presented to the eyes of the thirsty individuals, who, for a time, had degenerated from the dignified character of a human being to that of a beast of draught, without any pretensions to many of the good qualities which the latter possesses, and in one respect showing themselves by far its inferior, for as long as there was a drop of ale in the hogsheads, the liquid was poured down their throats, which reduced some of them to a state in which no beast was ever known to exhibit itself. A scene of confusion and rioting now commenced, which lasted until early on the Sunday morning, when the constables were called in to put an end to the disgraceful scene.

With a little amplification the foregoing may be considered as a true statement of the triumphant entry of Mr. Cobbett into Botley, and which he considered as affording him gratification sufficiently ample to repay him for every thing which he had suffered, and this will sufficiently prove that the act of a set of individuals whose support and approbation at any other previous period, Mr. Cobbett would have disdained either to receive or acknowledge, was not the voluntary act of the inhabitants in general, who, although ever ready to compassionate the truly oppressed, and to defend the rights and liberties of the subjects, are not less ready, when occasion requires it, to prove by their support of its laws, their real attachment to the constitution of the country.

In March, 1817, we find Mr. Cobbett involved in an affair of some difficulty and danger. On the 11th of that month a public meeting had been convened at Winchester by the sheriff, for the purpose of presenting an address to the Prince Regent. In the course of the proceedings Mr. Cobbett proposed an amendment to the address, by inserting after the word "*Constitution,*" as "*established by Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights, and the Act of Habeas Corpus, for which our*

forefathers fought and bled." Previous to putting this amendment Mr. Lockhart, (a gentlemen well known for his connexion with the Quarterly Review,) came forward and declared that, if the meeting adopted Mr. Cobbett's amendment, they would declare against loyalty, and for every thing that was seditious and wicked. Upon which Mr. Cobbett came forward again, and exclaimed:—"Gentlemen, I am happy to say, that however we have been misled by our passions this day to express our difference in so violent a manner, upon one point I am sure we shall be perfectly unanimous, and that is, that Mr. Lockhart has been guilty of the *foulest misrepresentation* that ever was made by mortal man."

In consequence of the severity of this expression, on the same evening, after the meeting broke up, Mr. Lockhart waited on Mr. Cobbett at his inn, accompanied by two gentlemen. What followed is thus related by Mr. Cobbett, "I told him that I would have no communication with him, except it was in writing. They wanted to sit down in the room where Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. Hunt, and other gentlemen were with me; but this I told them I would not suffer, and bade them go out of the room. They did so, and then a correspondence took place, which I insert here word for word and letter for letter, and if the learned friend should feel sore at seeing his *agitation* exposed in his illiterate notes, let him thank his own folly and imprudence for the exposure."

"SIR,

"As you requested me to put in writing the object of my requesting a meeting with you, I beg to inform you, it was with a view to your retracting the word *foul*, which you applied to me, by stating I had been guilty of 'foul misrepresentation.' I did not hear whether you said 'of your language or intentions.'

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"J. J. LOCKHART."

“ Winchester, 11th of March, 1817.

“ SIR,

“ I did not say that it was ‘ *a foul* misrepresentation’ which you had made, but ‘ the *foulest* misrepresentation that ever was made by mortal man,’ an opinion which I still entertain, and always shall, until you shall fully express your sorrow for the effects of that mortification which I hope, led your tongue beyond the cool dictates of your mind.

“ I am, sir,

“ Your most humble and obedient servant,

“ WM. COBBETT.”

“ SIR,

“ I have received your answer, which leaves no alternative, except that of my insisting on that satisfaction which you owe me as a gentleman, and which I wish you would empower some friend to arrange this evening.

“ I am, sir, your obedient servant.

March 11th, 1817.

“ J. J. LOCKHART.

“ I shall remain in Winchester this evening for this purpose until eight o’clock, and a friend will deliver this letter to you, to accept your arrangement.

“ To Wm. Cobbett, Esq.”

To this hostile communication Mr. Cobbett returned the following pithy reply :—

“ Winchester, March 11th, 1817.

“ SIR,

“ If I could stay here another day, I would amuse myself with some fun with you, but having business of more importance on hand, I must request of you to renew your pleasant correspondence, upon our arrival in town. In the meanwhile, I remain,

“ Your most obedient,

“ and most humble servant,

“ WM. COBBETT.”

Now a few plain facts will enable the reader to form a perfectly correct judgment of the case between these two parties,—First, Mr. Lockhart knew that Cobbett had written many essays reprobating, in the strongest terms, the practice of duelling.—Second, he knew that the person he had thus challenged, had ever held it is a species of suicide, for a man in his situation, to fight a duel, seeing, that if onemissed him, another would be found, till some one should kill him.—Third, (and this was Mr. Lockhart's rock of safety,) he knew well that if Cobbett accepted of his challenge, he must instantly forfeit five thousand pounds. He knew that the man he had thus challenged had been bound in recognizances for seven years from the year 1812. In this then, we see the safety of this political wrangler. Mr. Cobbett wisely refused to give the required meeting, and we think the reader must be perfectly satisfied that his refusal did not in any way compromise his character or fair fame.

In a few days after this affair, a report was industriously circulated by some injudicious friends, that Mr. Cobbett had been horsewhipped by Lockhart, while returning from a Mr. Brown's at Peckham, where he (Mr. C.) had slept the previous night. To this allegation Mr. Cobbett promptly replied, and in the next number of the Register appeared the following denial.

"Now, who, at a distance from London, would not believe this to be *true*? Who would not believe that there was, at least, truth in *some part* of it? Who would not believe, that, at any rate, I was at *Mr Brown's on Sunday*? Who would believe that it was *wholly* false? Nevertheless, I was not within several miles of Peckham last Sunday; I slept at No. 8, Catherine Street on that night; I never was out of that house on the Monday; and I have never seen *Lockhart the Brave* since he came to me, with his *two witnesses*, at the Black Swan at Winchester." Thus then were their lies refuted by a few plain facts, and Mr. Cobbett was never again troubled by these retailers of foul inventions.

CHAPTER. III.

THE attention of Cobbett was now chiefly directed to his Register, which might be considered to him in the character of the Goose and the Golden Eggs ; it being a source of constant emolument to him, and with the sense of the injury which he had received from the government of the country, his activity appeared to have received a fresh stimulus, seeking for every possible means of annoying those who sat at the helm of the state. He reduced the price of his Register, and called into existence that "two penny trash" which, being to be had so cheap, became the vehicle of infusing into the minds of the people, particularly the lower classes, the dangerous principles of disaffection and sedition, and above all, of exciting the people to a contempt and hatred of royalty itself.

The year 1817 was an epoch of fearful and engrossing interest, and of the most perilous importance to the cause of that reform, which, in spite of the desperate attempt of power to crush it for ever in 1817, has since obtained a partial triumph, the sure precursor of a future and complete victory. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended by Parliament, on the 4th of March 1817, at the same time that other bills were passed, now known by the name of the Six Acts Bill by which the punishment of death was to be inflicted on those, who attended public meetings and did not disperse on being ordered so to do by the magistrates.

It must be admitted, that the country was in a most alarming state, and that some strong coercive measures were necessary, to keep down the rising spirit of the people ; but in regard to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, it was openly avowed by government, that this stretch of arbitrary

power was chiefly occasioned by the writings of William Cobbett, and was resorted to for the purpose of enabling the Home Secretary to throw that formidable champion of reform again into prison, or what was still more, to entrap him in the infraction of some of the clauses of the Six Acts Bill, by which even his life might become forfeit. This avowal was the more extraordinary and humiliating, inasmuch as it was at the same time acknowledged by Lord Sidmouth, that the law officers of the court had not been able to find anything in Mr. Cobbett's writings upon which a prosecution could be instituted, with a reasonable prospect of obtaining a conviction against him. The constitution of the country was, therefore, temporarily subverted, and the personal freedom of every one of its inhabitants flagitiously placed at the absolute disposal of the government, for the purpose of *silencing* a man, against whose language no violations of the law could even be alleged, and whose influence and reputation had been only increased by the futile attempts, which had been previously made, on the part of all the advocates of corruption, to combat his principles and doctrines through the medium of the press.

The Habeas Corpus Act was no sooner suspended, than Mr. Cobbett secretly determined to *fly from a power*, which had thus trampled upon the only law to which he could appeal for protection. In the meantime, however, and while he was preparing for his departure, he published his Political Register of the 8th March. "On the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act." "On the Sedition and Treason Bills." "On the state to which we are reduced." This was followed by the Political Register of March 15th and 22d, the former addressed, "To the true and good men of Hampshire." "On the Meeting at Winchester" &c. and the latter "A Letter to the *dehuded* People," in which he exposes the despotism under the gloom of which the country was then placed.

At length he set off for Liverpool to take shipping for America. The following description of his journey from London, though, short is exquisitely beautiful and touching. Few

men, even of those endowed with the necessary faculties and qualifications, could have maintained a state of mind fit for shewing and feeling the beauties of the scenery through which Mr. Cobbett passed, under the *trying circumstances* that had driven him from a country, which he evidently loved so well, and during his actual flight *from the dangers* with which he was threatened.

"I and my two sons, William and John, set off from London early in the morning of Saturday, the 22nd of March. We reached Litchfield that night, and Liverpool the next night about ten o'clock. Of the whole country through which we passed, and all of which was very fine, we were most delighted with ten miles from Dunchurch to Coventry, in Warwickshire. The road very wide and smooth, rows of fine trees on the side of it, beautiful whitethorn hedges, and rows of ash, and elm, dividing the fields; the fields so neatly kept; the soil so rich; the herds and flocks of fine fat cattle and sheep on every side; the beautiful homesteads and numerous stacks of wheat. Every object seemed to say. Here are resources! here is wealth! here are all the means of national power and individual happiness! And yet at the end of these ten beautiful miles, covered with all the means of affording luxury in diet and dress, we entered that city of Coventry, which, out of twenty thousand inhabitants, contained at that very moment, upwards of eight thousand miserable paupers, a fact which we well knew, not only from the petition just presented to the Parliament, but also from a detailed official account in manuscript, which I had in my possession amongst my papers in London, and one of the members for which, formerly public spirited, though now miserable city, (Butterworth, the law stationer of, Fleet-street,) had voted for all the recent measures of government, and had been one of the most active, though the most silent enemies of the cause of reform.

"As we proceeded on through Staffordshire and Cheshire, all the same signs of wealth and sources of power on the surface of the earth, struck us by day, and by night those

more sublime signs, which issued from the furnaces on the hills. The causeways for foot passengers, *paved* in some instances for tens of miles together, as well and more neatly than the streets of London are paved; the beautiful rows of trees, shading those causeways; the canals, winding about through the valleys, conveying coal, lime, stone, merchandize of all sorts; the immense and lofty woods on the hills; and the fat cattle and sheep everywhere, every object seemed to pronounce an eulogium on the industry, the skill, and perseverance of the people. And *why* then are these people in a state of such misery and degradation? We knew the cause before, and so did you. The fat cattle and corn do not remain in sufficient numbers amongst those, who, by their various toil, produce them. The farmer, instead of giving to his labourer a sufficient share of what is produced, is compelled to give it to the tax-gatherer; the tax-gatherer hands it over to the fundholder, the sinecurist, the pensioner, the military department, the placemen, &c. It is the same with the master manufacturer, and the master tradesman, who, instead of giving their work people a sufficient quantity of money to enable them to share in the fat cattle and sheep, are compelled to give that share to the tax-gatherer. Hence it is that the far greater part of these things go away from the spot, and the neighbourhood where they are raised, to be eaten by those who receive the taxes, and by those, who attend upon them; the taxes are carried away in the pockets of the taxing people, and the wagons and barges carry the corn, the butter, the cheese; and their own legs carry the cattle, pigs, and sheep, *after the taxes*. Accordingly we met every few miles, droves of fat oxen, pigs, and sheep, marching up towards the grand resort of the fundholders and boroughmongers and others who live upon the taxes."

Cobbett's farewell to England, is an extraordinary and remarkable document, extraordinary for the cause of its production, and remarkable for the nature of its contents. It is dated Liverpool, March 28th 1817. AS SOON AS THE PUBLISHER IN LONDON WAS ASSURED THAT MR. COBBETT HAD

ACTUALLY SET SAIL, it was published under the title of "Mr. Cobbett's taking leave of his Countrymen." It was extensively circulated throughout the kingdom, and was universally read, by the authors and supporters of public abuses, with open exultation and seeming triumph, though with secret shame; the self-abusing consciousness of degradation and guilt; by the friends of Mr. Cobbett, the Reformers, the advocates and adherents of liberty, with deep and unfeigned regret, and undisguised though short lived dismay. Consistently however, with that spirit of candour and impartiality with which this work has been distinguished, we are free to confess, that those, who attribute the flight of Cobbett to America to political motives, and to a fear of the operation of the Six Acts Bill, form a very erroneous opinion of the secret motives by which he was governed. It was given out by Cobbett, and echoed by his friends, that the ministers in bringing forward the Six Acts Bill, had their eye principally directed to the publications of Cobbett, which it was their positive intention to suppress. On the other hand, we will venture to affirm, that the passing of the Six Acts Bill would not have driven Cobbett from England; but his temporary departure from the country, was an act of necessity, he was literally weighed down with a load of debt, and he had only the option of liberty in America, or imprisonment in England. His intended departure was kept a profound secret, and so little did any of his advocates and adherents know of his intention, that he was actually under an engagement to assist Mr. Hunt at a meeting at Devizes, to support a petition for a Reform in Parliament, and when Mr. Hunt was momentarily expecting him, the Courier newspaper was put into his hand, announcing the sailing of Cobbett from *Liverpool*. At the time of Cobbett's departure from London, on his way to Liverpool, he had not brought himself under the penal power of the Six Acts Bill; he had nothing to fear from any immediate prosecution against him, on the score of *any thing* which he had written in his Registers, and therefore he fled the country, according to his report, on account of

some prospective evil that might happen to him, but which had not yet overtaken him. The caution of the publisher of "His Farewell to England," is strongly corroborative of the sentiments now advanced; he would not publish the Farewell until he knew that *Mr. Cobbett had actually set sail*; and why was this precaution necessary? because he knew, that were his creditors to have arrived at the fact of his intended departure from this country, the most immediate steps would have been taken to prevent it.

We are by no means disposed to attach either belief or importance to any statement which may appear in the *Quarterly Review*,* touching the actions of a political opponent, and particularly to any accusations which, in the overflowings of their black and rancorous venom, they may spew out against a man like Cobbett, who, in their opinion, was an amalgamation of all that is base and vicious in human nature. In the review, however, of Fearon's *Sketches in America*, inserted in the *Quarterly*, we find some strictures on the flight of Cobbett to America, which are characterized by that low scurrility and abuse, which so frequently disfigure the pages of that work, but which certainly have truth for their foundation in as far as regards the expatriation of Cobbett.

We will not here insert Mr. Fearon's account of his visit

* We will take this opportunity of condescending to notice a statement made in the *Quarterly Review* respecting ourselves, where the sapient Quidnuncs, who fill the pages of that work with their dull and leaden incubrations, conferred on us the positive service of their condemnation of our "voyage of Captain Ross to the Arctic Regions." We certainly did speak in a most disparaging manner of the value of the discoveries of Captain Ross, and we treated the whole of his services on that expedition, with that contempt and ridicule, which they so richly merited. Great and wonderful, however, as may have been the discoveries of Captain Ross, they sink into direct insignificance, when compared with one made by the hireling scribe, (I thank thee, slave, for teaching me that word,) of the *Quarterly*, for although we be perfectly conscious of our own existence, and that we are at this moment a tangible and living body, now seated at one of the tables in the Reading Room of the British Museum, yet the political slave of the *Quarterly* has discovered that there is no such person living, or ever did live, as Robert Huish, and that the Opera Huishiana, are, like talent in the *Quarterly*, no where to be found.

to Cobbett, as it will appear in its appropriate place, but we shall merely confine ourselves to those passages, as quoted from Mr. Fearon's work, which have an immediate reference to the cause of Cobbett's flight. "My feelings," says Mr. Fearon, "in walking along the path, which led to the residence of this celebrated man, are difficult to describe. The idea of a person *self-banished*, leading an isolated life in a foreign land: a path rarely trod, fences in ruin, the gate broken down, a house mouldering to decay, added to much awkwardness of feeling on my part, calling upon an entire stranger, produced in my mind, feelings of thoughtfulness and melancholy."

"There is, however," says the Reviewer, "an inaccuracy in this *sombre* delineation. Had Mr. Fearon condescended to learn any thing about Cobbett, that was not taught in Cobbett's Register, he might have known that this 'celebrated man,' was no otherwise self-banished, than those of his party, so justly described by Mr. Bristed, as defrauding the jails and the gallows by a precipitate flight. The 'celebrated' Cobbett fled from his creditors. That he should do this, is perfectly natural; the thing to be *admired* is, (we suppose the reviewer meant *wondered at*) that such a man should have creditors to flee from. Had he staid at Liverpool another tide, he would have been brought back, and consigned to Newgate or the King's Bench, for the remainder of his life. The good genius of England prevailed, and he escaped, leaving behind him debts to the amount of six and thirty thousand pounds!! In Long Island he can do no mischief. 'Measter's Yorkshire too!'"

We give the list of Cobbett's creditors at this time, from an authentic document:

	£.
Mr. T—n—o, Mortgagee of the Botley Estates	16,000
Mr. R—	01,000
Sir Francis Burdett	4,000
Tipper and Fry, Stationers	3,500
Mr. B—n	2,000

Mr. L——r	-	-	-	-	1,300
Executors of Mr. B——e	-	-	-	-	900
Mr. P——s	-	-	-	-	450
Mr. W——e	-	-	-	-	500
Messrs. H. T. and M——x, Printers	-				500
Mr. S——n, Printer	-	-	-	-	100
Sundry poor Shopkeepers at Botley	-				400

The above is sufficient to show that Mr. Cobbett had other reasons than the Six Acts Bill, for choosing America as his temporary place of residence.

As on the return of Cobbett from America, we shall have occasion to enter again upon the discussion of his debts, in consequence of the treatment, which he received immediately on his arrival, we shall now proceed to give his Farewell Address.

“ MY BELOVED COUNTRYMEN,

“ Soon after this reaches your eyes, those of the writer will, possibly, have taken the last glimpse of the land that gave him birth, the land in which his parents lie buried, the land of which he has always been so proud, the land in which he leaves a people, whom he, shall to his last breath, love and esteem beyond all the rest of mankind.

“ Every one, if he can do it without wrong to another, has a right to pursue the path to his own happiness; as my happiness, however, has long been inseparable from the hope of assisting in restoring the rights and liberties of my country, nothing could have induced me to quit that country, while there remained the smallest chance of my being able, by remaining, to continue to aid her cause. No such chance is now left. The laws which have just been passed, especially if we take into view the real objects of those laws, forbid us to entertain the idea, that it would be possible to write on political subjects according to the dictates of truth and reason, without drawing down upon our heads certain and swift destruction. It was well observed by Mr. Brougham, in a late

debate, that every writer, who opposes the present measures, 'must now feel, that he sits down to write with a halter about his neck;' an observation the justice of which must be obvious to all the world.

"Leaving, therefore, all considerations of personal interest, personal feeling, and personal safety; leaving even the peace of mind of a numerous and most affectionate family wholly out of view, I have reasoned thus with myself: What is now left to be done? We have urged our claims with so much truth; we have established them so clearly on the ground of both law and reason, that there is no answer to us to be found, other than that of a suspension of our personal safety. If I still write in support of those claims, I must be blind not to see, that a dungeon is my doom. If I write at all, and do not write in support of those, I not only degrade myself, but I do a great injury to the rights of the nation by appearing to abandon them. If I remain here, I must, therefore, cease to write, either from compulsion or from a sense of duty to my countrymen; therefore, it is impossible to do any good to the cause of my country by remaining in it; but if I remove to a country where I can write with perfect freedom, it is not only possible, but very probable, that I shall, sooner or later, be able to render that cause important and lasting services.

"Upon this conclusion it is, that I have made my determination; for, though life would be scarcely worth preserving, with the consciousness that I walked about my fields or slept in my bed, merely at the mercy of a Secretary of State; though, under such circumstances, neither the song of birds in the spring, nor the well-strawed homestead in winter could make me forget, that I and my rising family were slaves, still there is something so powerful in the thought of country and neighbourhood, and home, and friends, there is something so strong in the numerous and united ties with which these and endless other objects fasten the mind to a long-inhabited spot, that to tear one's self away nearly approaches to the separating the soul from the body. But, then, on the other hand, when

I asked myself: 'What! shall I submit in silence? Shall I be as dumb as one of my horses? Shall that indignation which burns within me, be quenched? Shall I make no effort to preserve even the chance of assisting to better the lot of my unhappy country? Shall that mind, which has communicated its warmth to millions of other minds, now be extinguished for ever? and shall those, who with thousands of pens at their command, still see the tide of opinion rolling more and more heavily against them, now be for ever secure from that pen, by the efforts of which, they feared being overwhelmed? Shall truth never again be uttered? Shall her voice never again be heard, even from a distant shore?'

"Thus was the balance turned; and, my countrymen, be you well assured, that, though I shall, if I live, be at a distance from you; though the ocean will roll between us, not all the barriers that nature as well as art can raise, shall be sufficient to prevent you from reading some parts, at least, of what I write; and, notwithstanding all the wrongs of which I justly complain; notwithstanding all the indignation that I feel; notwithstanding all the provocations that I have received, or that I may receive; never shall there drop from my pen any thing, which, according to the law of the land, I might not safely write and publish in England. Those, who have felt themselves supported by power, have practised towards me foul play without measure; but, though I shall have the means of retaliation in my hands, never will I follow their base example.

"Though I quit my country, far be it from me to look upon her cause as desperate, and still farther be it from me to wish to infuse despondency into your minds. *I can serve that cause no longer by remaining here*; but the cause itself is so good, so just, so manifestly right and virtuous, and it has been combated by means so unusual, so unnatural, and so violent, that it must triumph in the end. Besides, the circumstances of the country all tend to favour the cause of reform. Not a our tenth part of the evils of the system is yet in existence. The country gentlemen, who have till now been amongst

most decided adversaries, will be very soon compelled, for their own preservation, to become our friends and fellow-labourers. Not a fragment of their property will be left, if they do not speedily bestir themselves. They have been induced to believe, that a reform of the Parliament would expose them to plunder or degradation ; but they will very soon find, that it will afford them the only chance of escaping both. The wonder is, that they do not see this already, or, rather, that they have not seen it for years past. But, they have been blinded by their foolish pride ; that pride, which has nothing of mind belonging to it, and which, accompanied with a consciousness of a want of any natural superiority over the labouring classes, seeks to indulge itself in a species of vindictive exercise of power. There has come into the heads of these people, I cannot very well tell how, a notion, that it is proper to consider the labouring classes as *a distinct caste*. They are called, now a days, by these gentlemen, the *peasantry*. This is a new term as applied to Englishmen. It is a French word, which, in its literal sense, means, *country folks*. But, in the sense, in which it is used in France and Germany, it means, not only country people, or country folks, but also a *distinct and degraded class of persons*, who have no pretensions whatever to look upon themselves, in any sense, as belonging to the same society, or community, as the gentry ; but who ought always to be *kept down in their proper places*. And, it has become, of late, the fashion to consider the labouring classes in England in the same light, and to speak of them and treat them accordingly, which never was the case in any former age.

“The writings of Malthus, who considers men as *mere animals*, may have had influence in the producing of this change ; and, we now frequently hear the working classes called the *population*, just as we call the animals upon a farm the *stock*. It is curious, too, that this contumely towards the great mass of the people, should have grown into vogue amongst the country gentlemen and their families, at a time

when they themselves are daily and hourly losing the estates descended to them from their forefathers. They see themselves stript of the means of keeping up that hospitality, for which England was once so famed, and of which there remains nothing but the *word* in the dictionary; they see themselves reduced to close up their windows, live in a corner of their houses, sneak away to London, crib their servants in their wages, and hardly able to keep up a little tawdry show; and it would seem that, for the contempt which they feel that their meanness must necessarily excite in the common people, they endeavour to avenge themselves, and at the same time to disguise their own humiliation, by their haughty and insolent deportment towards the latter; thus exhibiting the mixture of poverty and pride, which has been ever deemed better calculated than any other union of qualities, to draw down upon the possessors the most unfriendly of human feelings.

“It is curious, also, that this fit of novel and ridiculous pride should have afflicted the minds of these persons at the very time that the working classes are become singularly enlightened. Not enlightened in the manner that the sons of Cant and Corruption would wish them to be. The conceited creatures in what is called high life, and who always judge of men by their clothes, imagine that the working classes of the people have their minds sufficiently occupied by what is called *religious and moral tracts*—simple, insipid dialogues and stories, calculated for the minds of children seven or eight years old, or for those of savages just beginning to be civilized. These conceited persons have no idea that the minds of the working classes ever presume to rise above this infantine level. But these conceited persons are most grossly deceived: they are the *deluded* part of the community; deluded by a hireling and corrupt press, and by the conceit and insolence of their own minds. The working classes of the people understand well what they read; they dive into all matters connected with politics; they have a relish not only for interesting statement,

for argument, for discussion; but the powers of *eloquence* are by no means lost upon them; and, in many, many instances, they have shewn themselves to possess infinitely greater powers of describing and of reasoning, than have ever been shown generally by that description of persons, who, with Malthus, regard them as mere animals. In the report of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords, it is observed, that, since the people have betaken themselves to this reading and this discussion, *their character seems to be wholly changed*. I believe it is indeed! It is the natural effect of enlightening the mind to change the character. But, is not this change for the better? If it be not, why have we heard so much about the efforts for instructing the children of the poor? Nay; there are institutions for teaching *full-grown* persons to read and write; and a gentleman, upon whose word I can rely, assured me, that in a school of this sort, in Norfolk, he actually saw one woman teaching another woman to read, and that both teacher and pupil had *spectacles upon their noses*! What, then! Has it been intended, that these people, when taught to read should read nothing but Hannah More's *Sinful Sally*, and Mrs. Trimmer's Dialogues? Faith! The working classes of the people have a relish for no such trash. They are not to be amused by a recital of the manifold blessings of a state of things, in which they have not half enough to eat, nor half enough to cover their nakedness by day, or to keep them from perishing by night. They are not to be amused with pretty stories about the "*bounty of Providence, in making brambles* for the purpose of tearing off pieces of the sheep's wool, *in order* that the little birds may come and get it to line their nests with to keep their young ones warm!" Stories like these are not sufficient to fill the mind of the *working* classes of the people. They want something more solid. They have had something more solid. Their minds, *like a sheet* of paper, have received the lasting impressions of undeniable fact and unanswerable argument; and it will *always* be a source of the greatest satisfaction to me to reflect,

that I have been mainly instrumental in giving those impressions, which I am very certain, will never be effaced from the minds of the people of this country.

"Do those, who pretend to believe that the people are *debailed*, and who say that these laws are not aimed against *the people*, but merely against their seducers; do those persons really imagine, that the people are thus *to be deceived*? Do they imagine, for instance, that the people who read my *Register*, will not in this case, regard any attack upon me, as an attack upon themselves? It is curious enough to observe how precisely the contrary, the reasoning of these persons is in all *other* cases. An attack upon the clergy is always deemed by them to be an attack upon religion. An attack upon the king is always deemed by them to be an attack upon the nation. And it is very notorious, that in all criminal cases, the language of the law is, that the offence has been committed against the peace of the realm, and in contempt of the king, his crown, and dignity. Yet in the present case, the leaders of the reformers are to be supposed to have no common interest with the reformers themselves; and it appears to be vainly imagined, that millions of men, all united in petitioning in the most peaceable and orderly manner for one particular object, will be easily persuaded to believe that those who *have taken the lead* amongst them may be very properly sacrificed, and that, too, without *any injury at all to the cause*! What should we think of an enemy in the field, who were to send over a flag of truce, and propose to us to give up our *Generals*! Only our *generals*! That is *all*! The enemy has no objection to *us*: It is only our *generals* that he wants; and, then we shall have peace with him at once. There was once, the Fable tells us, a war between the *Wolves* and the *Sheep*, the latter being well protected by a parcel of brave and skilful *Dogs*. The Wolves set on foot a negotiation, the object of which was everlasting peace between the parties, and the proposition was, on the part of the Wolves, that there should be *hostages*

on both sides ; that the Wolves should put their *young ones* into the hands of the Sheep, and the Sheep should put their *Dogs* into the hands of the Wolves. In an evil hour the Sheep agreed to this compact ; and the very first opportunity, the Wolves, having no longer any Dogs to contend with, flew amongst the fleecy fools and devoured them and their lambs without mercy and without mitigation.

"The flocks of reformers in England are not to be *deluded* in this manner. They well know, that every blow, which is aimed against the men who have taken the most prominent part in the cause of reform, is aimed against that cause itself, and at every person who is attached to that cause, just as much, just as effectually, as a blow aimed at the head of a man is aimed at his fingers and his toes.

"The country gentlemen, therefore, will never see the day when the working classes will again be reconciled to them, unless they shall cordially take the lead amongst those working classes. This, I am in hopes, they will do ; for every day of their lives will make their own inevitable ruin more and more manifest. But whether they do this or not, the consequences of the present measures will, I am convinced, be the same. They will only tend to make the catastrophe more dreadful than it would otherwise have been. The funding system will go regularly on, producing misery upon the back of misery, and irritation upon the back of irritation. It is that great cause which is constantly at work. Nothing can stop its progress, short of reduction of the interest of the debt ; and as that measure seems to be rejected with obstinacy as persevering as are the destroying effects of the system itself, nothing can reasonably be expected but a violent dissolution.

"The nation will recollect how confidently the ministers spoke last year of a speedy restoration to prosperity. Mr. Vansittart talked in a very gay and flippant style, about the raising of fourteen millions in taxes, in order to keep up the sinking fund, which fourteen millions, he said, would return

back to the country to enliven manufactures, commerce, and agriculture. The words were hardly out of his mouth, when I told you, that, if the fourteen millions did return back to the country, it would only be for the purpose of transferring fourteen millions worth more of the property of the land-owners, the ship-owners, the manufacturers, the farmers, and the traders, from them to the pockets of the fund-holders and the sinecure placemen and pensioners, together with all those who lived upon the taxes. But all the former classes are now become so reduced in point of property; all their property has so fallen in value, that they now have nothing to offer in pledge for the money which the fund-holders have to lend them; and the consequence of this is, that we now behold the curious spectacle of a *loan* made by the fund-holders to the government of France. This loan is stated at *ten millions sterling*. And now, my Friends, pray observe what a traffic is here going on! These ten millions of money have been raised in taxes upon us to pay the interest of the debt, or part of it. The fund-holders having got this money into their possession, lend it to the government of France, because we, who pay the taxes, are become too poor; our property is fallen too low in value for the fund-holders to lend it to us; and thus ten millions worth of the income of the gentlemen and of the fruits of the labour of the people, are conveyed over to another nation, which must tend to give life to agriculture, and trades, and manufactures in that nation, in just the same degree, that the operation tends to depress and ruin our own country. To make this as clear as day-light, let us suppose the Isle of Wight to be cut off from all trade and all interchange of commodities with the rest of the kingdom. Let us suppose that all the people in the Isle of Wight are compelled to pay a great portion of their incomes and of the fruit of their labour every year to be sent over and expended in the rest of the kingdom; and that no part of what they thus pay is to go back again to the Isle of Wight, except the interest

of it. Is it not evident, that the Isle of Wight must shortly become most wretchedly poor and miserable? Will not the proprietors there get rid of their property as fast as they are able, and will not they get away into other parts of the kingdom? Yes! and this is what the people of England are now doing with regard to France. The property of England is now going away, and all those who are able, and do not live upon the taxes, are following the property as fast as they can. To take a single instance; suppose me to be living in the parish of Botley, or rather, to suppose something nearer the reality, suppose Mr. Eyre, who does live there, and who having a landed estate, to the amount, perhaps, of two or three thousand pounds a year, and who, being a very good master, very hospitable and kind to all his neighbours, employing great numbers of them and expending the greater part of his clear income amongst them, were, instead of so expending his income, to lend it to the government of France, and to receive from that government the *interest* only every year: it is clear, that instead of *two thousand* pounds a year to expend among his neighbours, he would have only *two hundred* pounds a year to expend amongst them. Here would be a falling off of eighteen hundred pounds a year, which, at thirty pounds per family, would take away the means of living from *sixty families*. If this mode of disposing of Mr. Eyre's income would deprive sixty families of the means of living, the loan which has been made to the government of France by the fund-holders, through the agency of the Barings and others, must deprive of the means of living *thirty three thousand three hundred and thirty-three families!* And this is a truth, my good and wishing countrymen, which I defy the William Giffords, apostate Southseys, and all the herd of sinecure and hired scribes, to contravert. The *interest*, you will perceive, will be sent back again to England, and may possibly be expended amongst the people of England, but all the principal will be sent to France, to animate French manufactures, com-

merce, trade, and agriculture, all of which will be fed by the ruin of England.

“The same will be going on, in other shapes, with regard to other foreign countries, and especially with regard to America. For can it be believed, that men, in the farming and trading line, will remain here to give their last shilling to the fund-holders, and to see their families brought to the workhouse, while a country of freedom extends its arms to afford protection to their property as well as to their persons? At this very moment hundreds of farmers are actually preparing to remove themselves and their property to America, and many are now upon the voyage. Now, then, let us see what will be the effects of operations of this sort. A man, who *rents* a farm, we will suppose, determines not to remain any longer under such a state of things. He sells off his stock, amounting, we will say, to five thousand pounds. He turns the stock into money, and he carries the money to America. In England he gave employment and paid in poor-rates the means of supporting about twelve or fourteen families. Whence are to come the means of supporting these families when he is gone? There is no one to supply his place; for there are thousands of farms now lying waste. These families must go to augment the already intolerable burden of the poor-rates; they must go to add to the immense mass of misery already existing, while the farmer himself, though he has lost, by the low price of his stock, two thirds of his fortune, carries away the remainder, together with his valuable industry and skill, to add to the agriculture of America; to give employment to families there; to add to the population and power of that country; and to congratulate himself on his escape from ruinous taxation, and his family upon their escape from the horrors of a poor-house. And who can blame such a man? He must still love his country; but the first law of nature, self-preservation, imperiously calls on him to abandon it for ever!”

Mr. Cobbett then goes on to say, that from these and of

causes the country must as long as the same state of things continued, go on declining and perishing,—with its means daily diminishing,—and having no remedy for the evil but that of nearly annihilating the National Debt, and of reducing nine tenths of the expenses of maintaining the army, for which army, indeed, there would be no occasion but for debt. The great question was, whether the boroughmongers could carry on the military and suspension system after the funding system should be destroyed. This order of things,—an immense standing army, with corps of yeomanry all over the country, with the press under the superintendence of the magistrates, and with the personal safety of every man taken from him, he called the *boroughmongering system*; notoriously adopted for the purpose of crushing the reformers. The funding system could not last long. No measures, no powers, no events, could save it from destruction at the end of a few years. The vital question was, whether the boroughmongering system could support itself amidst all the uproar and turmoil of the breaking up of the funding system, and whether it could consolidate itself in this country,—a question which would settle the fate of England, but the solution of which appeared to be more difficult than any other that had ever presented itself to his mind.—A change had already taken place in the tone of those who talk so boldly about the endless resources of the country. They began to falter, and were frightened at the work of their own hands. Though surrounded with all the securities of an army and of the absolute power of the imprisonment act, still they trembled within, and were scared at the desolation they had brought upon the country. They were compelled to smile upon the fund-holders, and yet they would fain that there were no such people in existence; and being baffled in all their projects and prospects, they knew not which way to turn themselves. It had been their project to cause the Bank to pay again in specie: but it appeared to be now their project to get fresh quantities of paper again afloat. This, however, would be

difficult if not impossible of accomplishment, seeing that the proprietors of lands and of goods had nothing to offer in security for it; and besides, if it were effected, it would be equal to reducing the value of the currency one-third, and would in fact be a proportionate breach of all contracts. The discredit of the paper money would become so notorious, that the people of all foreign nations would keep aloof from it, and would exclaim, "*Babylon the great has fallen!*"

After some more observations on the question of the currency, and after reiterating his reasons for quitting England for America, and cautioning the people as to the calumnies which would be published against him in his absence, Mr. Cobbett concludes his Farewell Address as follows:—

"A mutual affection, a powerful impulse, will, I hope, always exist between me and my hard-used countrymen; an affection, which my heart assures me, no time, no distance, no new connections, no new association of ideas, however enchanting, can ever destroy, or, in any degree, enfeeble or impair. The sight of a free, happy, well-fed, and well-clad people, will only tend to invigorate my efforts to assist in restoring you to the enjoyment of those rights and of that happiness, which are so well merited, by your honesty, your sincerity, your skill in all the useful arts, your kind-heartedness, your valour, and all the virtues which you possess in so supereminent a degree. A splendid mansion in America will be an object less dear to me than a cottage on the skirts of Waltham Chace or of Botley Common. Never will I own as my friend him who is not a friend of the people of England. I will never become a *Subject* or a *Citizen* in any other state, and will always be a *foreigner* in every country but England. Any foible that may belong to your character, I shall always willingly allow to my own. All the celebrity which my writings have obtained, and which they will preserve, long and long after Lords Liverpool and Sidmouth and Castlereagh are rotten and forgotten, I owe less to my own talents than to the discernment and that noble

spirit in you, which have at once instructed my mind and warmed my heart: and, my beloved countrymen, be you assured, that the last beatings of that heart will be, love for the people, for the happiness, and the renown of England; and hatred of their corrupt, hypocritical, dastardly, and merciless foes. * * * *

"It has been my misfortune to be doomed to *chop blocks*, and having been warned by Swift, (the first author after Moses I ever read,) of the misery of '*chopping blocks with a razor*.' I have generally employed a tool better suited to the stubs that I had to work upon. It shall be my endeavour in future to operate gently and smoothly; and if you should find me now and then laying on more like a hewer than a shaver, I beg that you will be pleased to ascribe it, not to any rudeness of disposition, but merely to that hardness and heaviness of hand, which my long and laborious chopping of blocks has naturally produced.

"The beautiful country, through which I have lately travelled, bearing, upon every inch of it, such striking marks of the industry and skill of the people, never can be destined to be inhabited by slaves. To suppose such a thing possible would be at once to libel the nation and to blaspheme against providence.

"WM. COBBETT.

"*Liverpool, 28th March, 1817.*"

CHAPTER IV.

Of his proceedings in America, Mr. Cobbett gives us an account in his publication, entitled, "A Year's Residence in the United States of America," to which, however, we cannot, by any means, give our unqualified approbation. It partakes more of the character of a boarding school miss's pocket book, than the journal of a man who pretends to give us an account of the manners and customs of the people, and of the inhabitants of the country, civil, political, and religious. From the spirit of egotism, tinged with no small proportion of vanity and self conceit, which so particularly distinguished the character of Cobbett, he might suppose that whatever fell from his pen, however trifling and ridiculous in itself, would, in the general estimation, possess an intrinsic value, although had the same matter issued from any other pen, he would have been the first to reprobate and condemn it. The whole of his journal is a mixture of the ridiculous, the ludicrous, the egotistical, the eccentric, and the entertaining. What boots it to the reader to be informed that in the year 1817, such a day was very hot, or that it rained, or that the weather was the same for three or four consecutive days, and yet we find whole pages nearly filled with such trivial and senseless stuff, for example, from the 18th to the 27th of August we meet with the following valuable information.

"18th.—Fine and hot.

"19th.—Very hot.

"20th.—Very hot.

"21st.—Fine hot day.

"22nd.—Fine hot day.

"23rd.—Fine hot day." To this, however, is appended a valuable remark, "I have now got an English servant, and

she makes us famous apple puddings. She says, she has never read Peter Pindar's account of the dialogue between the king and the cottage woman, and yet she knows very well how to get the apples within side of the paste. N.B.—No man ought to come here whose wife and daughters cannot make puddings and pies.

" 24th.—Fine hot day.

" 25th.—Fine hot day.

" 26th.—Fine hot day. Have not seen a cloud for many days.

" 27th.—Fine hot day.

" 28th.—Windy, and rather coldish. Put on cotton stockings, and a waistcoat with sleeves: do not like this weather."

And with such trivial and unimportant stuff does Cobbett fill his pages, and calls it the History of a Year's Residence, embracing a number of useful topics for the emigrant, the farmer, and the labourer; not but that in many parts of it, which we shall transcribe, the mind and character of Cobbett display themselves in their natural and inimitable colours, and which, in some degree, make ample amends for the dross which disfigures the remainder.

It is, however, but fair and liberal that Cobbett should be allowed to declare the motives for which he compiled his Year's Residence, and the only question then will be, whether he has fully satisfied the expectations which the perusal of his preface naturally gives rise to, and whether that information be really given, which can be of permanent and general value to the emigrant farmers, for whom he principally purposed to write. On this subject Cobbett asks, how is it that much can be known on the subject of *farming* by a man, who, for thirty-six out of fifty-two years of his life, has been a *soldier* or a *political writer*, and who of course has spent so large a part of his time in garrisons and cities? This natural curiosity I will endeavour to satisfy.

" Early habits and affections seldom quit us, while we have vigour of mind left. I was brought up under a father, whose talk was chiefly about his garden and his fields, with

regard to which he was famed for his skill and exemplary neatness. From my very infancy, from the age of six years, when I climbed up the side of a steep sandrock, and there scooped me out a plot four feet square, to make me a garden, and the soil for which I carried up in the bosom of my little blue smock frock (or hunting shirt), I have never lost one particle of my passion for these healthy, and rational, and heart-charming pursuits, in which every day presents something new, in which the spirits are never suffered to flag, and in which industry, skill, and care are sure to meet with their due reward. I have never for eight months together during my whole life, been without a garden. So sure are we to overcome difficulties when the heart and mind are bent on the thing to be obtained.

"The beautiful plantation of American trees round my house at Botley, the seeds of which were sent me, at my request from Pennsylvania in 1806, and some of which are now nearly forty feet high, all sown and planted by myself, will I hope long remain as a specimen of my perseverance in this way. During my whole life, I have been a *gardener*. There is no part of the business, which, first or last, I have not performed with my own hands, and as to it, I owe very little to books, except that of Tull, for I never read a good one in my life, except a French book called the "*Manuel du Jardinier*." *

"As to farming, I was bred at the plough tail, and in the hop gardens of Farnham in Surrey, my native place, and which spot as it so happened, is the neatest in England, and *I believe in the whole world* (??) All there is a garden. The neat culture of the hop extends its influence to the fields round about. Hedges cut with shears and every other mark

* Mr. Cobbett appears to have for a time a favourite book, like the Sultan a favourite mistress, with whose beauties and excellencies no other work can possibly compete. We have been informed, that the book from which he derived the greater part of his knowledge on Gardening and other useful pursuits, was *La Maison Rustique*, and that he prized it above all other works—we are however, now told, that he never read a good book on the subject of gardening in his life.

of skill and care strike the eye at Farnham, and become fainter and fainter as you go from it in every direction. I have had, besides, great experience in farming for several years of late, for one man will gain more knowledge in a year than another will in a life. It is the *taste* for the thing that really gives the knowledge.

"So this taste, produced in me by a desire to imitate a father whom I tenderly loved, and to whose every word I listened with admiration, I owe no small part of my happiness, for a greater proportion of which very few men ever had to be grateful to God. These pursuits, innocent in themselves, instructive in their very nature, and always tending to preserve health, have a constant, a never-failing source of recreation to me, and which I count amongst the greatest of their benefits and blessing: they have always in my house supplied the place of the card table, the dice box, the chess board, and the lounging bottle. Time never hangs on the hand of him, who delighteth in these pursuits, and who has books on the subject to read. Even when shut up in the walls of a prison, for having complained that Englishmen had been flogged in the heart of England, under a guard of German bayonets and sabres, even then I found in these pursuits a source of pleasure inexhaustible. To that of the whole of our English books on these matters, I then added the reading of all the valuable French books; and I then for the first time, read that book of books on husbandry, the work of Jethro Tull, to the principles of whom I owe more than to all my other reading and all my experience, and of which principles I hope to find time to give a sketch, at least, in some future part of this work.

"I wish it to be observed, that in any thing which I may say during the course of this work, though *truth* will compel me to state facts, which will doubtless tend to induce farmers to leave England for America, I *advise* no one so to do. I shall set down in writing nothing but what is strictly true. I myself am bound to England for life. My notions of allegiance to country; my great and anxious desire to assist in

the restoration of her freedom and happiness ; my opinion, that I possess in some small degree, at any rate, the power to render such assistance, and above all the other considerations, my unchangeable attachment to the people of England, and especially those, who have so bravely struggled for our rights ; these bind me to England, and I shall leave others to judge and act for themselves."

Mr. Cobbett arrived at New York on the 5th May 1817, and the following day went over to Long Island, where it was his intention to settle, and at which place he commences his journal. During the whole month of May not a single remark occurs which is worth transcribing, or the like of which might not be found in the diary of any school boy. On the 14th he informs us that people travel with great coats, to guard themselves against the morning and evening dew. And on the 23rd the valuable intelligence is communicated, that not a sprig of parsley was to be had for love or money—what improvidence ! nevertheless, he saw some cabbage plants up and in the fourth leaf.

The subject of the Indian corn furnishes Cobbett with an opportunity of paying his compliments to the lordlings of the English aristocracy, and as it is written in the true spirit of Cobbett, and the latter part not devoid of instruction, we will transcribe the whole passage.

"June 2rd.—Fine and warm. The Indian corn is generally come up, but looks yellow in consequence of the cold nights and little frosts. N.B.—I ought to describe to my English readers what this same Indian corn is. The Americans call it *CORN* by way of eminence, and wheat, rye, barley, and oats, which we confound under the name of *corn*, they confound under the name of *grain*. I was at a tavern in the village of North Hampstead, last fall (1817) when I just read in the *Courier* English newspapers, of a noble lord, who had been sent on his travels to France at ten years of age, and who, in his high-blooded ignorance of vulgar things, I suppose, had *swallowed a whole ear of corn*, which as the newspaper told us, had well nigh choked the noble lord. The landlord

had just been showing me some of his fine ears of corn, and I took the paper out of my pocket, and read the paragraph, 'what,' said he, '*swallow a whole ear of corn at once!* No wonder then that they have swallowed up poor old John Bull's substance.' After a hearty laugh, we explained to him, that it must have been wheat or barley, 'then,' said he, and very justly, that, 'the lord must have been a much greater fool than a hog is.' Indian corn is eaten, and is a very delicious thing in its half ripe or milky state, and these were *the ears of corn*, which the Pharisees, complained of the disciples for plucking off to eat on the sabbath day, for how were they to eat wheat ears, unless after the manner of the noble lord above mentioned? Besides, the Indian corn is a native of Palestine. The French, who doubtless brought it originally from the Levant, call it *Turkish corn*: *The Locusts* that John the Baptist lived on were not (as I used to wonder at, when a boy) the noxious vermin, that devoured the land of Egypt, but the *Bean* which comes in the long pods borne by the three-thorned locust tree, and of which I have an abundance here. The wild honey was the honey of the wild bees, and the hollow trees here contain swarms of them. The trees are cut, sometimes, in winter, and the part containing the swarm brought and placed near the house. I saw this lately in Pennsylvania.

"June 16th.—Fine, beautiful day, and when I say fine, I mean really fine. Never saw such fine weather. Not a morsel of *dirt*. The ground sucks up all—that is the ground *sucks up the dirt*. I walk about and work in the land in shoes made of deer skin. They are dressed *white*, like breeches leather. *I began to leave off my coat to day and do not expect to put it on again until October*. My hat is a white chip, with broad brim!! Never better health!! On the 17th the journal contains the valuable information, that a *dove* is sitting on her eggs in an apple tree!!

"19th June, Friday. But now," journalizes Cobbett, "*now comes my alarm*. The *mosquitoes*, and still worse the common *house fly*, which used to plague us so in Penn-

sylvania, and which were the only things I ever disliked belonging to the climate of America. Musquitoes are bred in *stagnant water*, of which here is none. Flies are bred in filth, of which none shall be near me, as long as I can use a shovel and a broom. They will follow *fresh meat* and *fish*. *Have neither*, or be very careful. I have this day put all these things into practice, and now let us see the result." The remainder of the information for the month of June, consists in telling us that the may-duke cherries are ripe, and that the white heart and black heart cherries are getting ripe.

On the 1st July, Mr. Cobbett buys some salt, and on the 5th, though it was a very hot day, he congratulates himself with "No flies yet." On the 8th, he informs us that he *now wears no waistcoat*, except in the morning and evening; the 9th was a fine hot day, closing that intelligence with the climax, "Apples to make puddings and pies, but our house-keeper does not know how to make an apple pudding. She puts the pieces of apple amongst the batter!! She has not read Peter Pindar."

"July 10th.—Fine hot day. I work in the land morning and evening, and write in the day, in the north room. The *dress* is now become a very convenient, or rather a very little inconvenient affair. Shoes, trousers, shirt, and hat. No plague of dressing and undressing."

On the 12th, Mr. Cobbett had still reason to congratulate himself, "*No flies yet? no musquitoes*," and the following day he found "*hot and heavy, like the pleading of a quarter sessions lawyer!*" From the 13th to the 20th, all fine hot days; on the 15th, he had some turnips, sown in June, and early cabbages, sown in May. On the 21st, there was some heavy rain at night, and a *few flies!* Not more than in England. "My son John," memorializes Cobbett, "who has just returned from Pennsylvania, says, they are as great a torment there as ever. At a friend's house (a farm house) there, *two quarts of flies* were caught in *one window* in *one day*. I do not believe there are two quarts on all my

premises. But then I cause all wash and slops to be carried *forty yards* from the house, (thirty nine, we suppose would not be sufficient.) I suffer no peelings, or greens, or any rubbish to lie near the house. I suffer no fresh meat to remain more than one day fresh in the house. I *proscribe all fish*. Do not suffer a dog to enter the house. Keep all pigs at a distance of (*exactly!*) *sixty yards*, and sweep all round about once every week at least." The foregoing may be said to be Cobbett's recipe for keeping away flies.

"The 25th was a fine hot day. *Not more flies than in England!* The 26th was a *broiling* day, and the 27th was another *broiler*. Some friends from England here to day. We spent a pleasant day. Drank success to the Debt, and destruction to the boroughmongers, *in gallons of milk and water*. *Not more flies than in England*.

"The 28th.—Hot, very hot. Never slept better in all my life. No covering. A sheet under me, and a straw bed. And then *so happy* to have no clothes to put on but shoes and trousers. My window looks to the east. The moment the Aurora appears, I am in the orchard. *It is impossible for any human being to lead a pleasanter life than this*:

"The 29th was another broiler. The dews now are equal to showers. I frequently, in the morning, wash hands and face, feet and legs, in the dews on the high grass!"

On the 1st August we have some important particulars presented to us, "Same broiling weather. I take off two shirts a day wringing wet. *I have a clothes horse to hang them on to dry*. *Drink about twenty good tumblers of milk and water every day*. No ailments. Head always clear. Go to bed by daylight very often; just after the hens go to roost, and rise again with them.

"August 2nd.—Hotter and hotter. *Not a single musquitoe yet.*" To the 15th it was very hot and close, on that day we are informed, "*three wet shirts to day*. *Obliged put on a dry shirt to go to bed in*.

"The 17th, a fine hot day, very hot. I fight the borough

villains stripped to my shirt, and with nothing on besides but shoes and trousers. Never ill, no head-aches, no muddled brains. The milk and water (twenty good tumblers a day,) is a great cause of this. I live on salads, other garden vegetables, apple puddings and pies, butter, cheese, (very good from Rhode Island,) eggs, and bacon. Resolved to have no more fresh meat, till cooler weather comes. Those, who have a mind to swallow, or be swallowed by *flies*, may eat fresh meat for me." From the 18th to the 28th, no other information is given, than that they were all *fine hot days*, and that on the latter day *he put on cotton stockings and a waistcoat with sleeves*.

The 3rd of September, we are informed was *famously hot*, and on that day Mr. Cobbett says, he began to *imitate the disciples*, at least in their *diet*, if in nothing else, "for to day we began plucking the ears of corn in a patch planted in the garden, on the second of June. But we, in imitation of Peter Pindar's pilgrim, take the liberty to *boil our corn*. We shall not starve now.

"The 9th was *rather hot*. We, amongst seven of us," says Cobbett, "*eat about twenty-five ears of corn a day!*" With me it wholly supplies the place of bread. I believe that a wine glass full of milk might be squeezed out of one ear. No wonder the disciples were tempted to pluck it when they were hungry, though it was on the sabbath day."

On the 15th, Mr. Cobbett *made a fire to write by*, and on the 18th, the same weather continued; we read, that he now *wore stockings, and a waistcoat, and neckhandkerchief*; but that on the 28th he left off the stockings again.

From the 28th of September to the 7th October, the journal tells us that the weather was very fine and warm, and that on the latter day, the wind was knocking down the *fall-pipins* for them. One weighed 12½ ounces avoirdupoise! and Cobbett closes his remarks on the fall-pipins, with the pungent observation, "If the king could have seen one of *these* in a dumpling!"

"October 11th.—Beautiful day! Sixty-one degrees in the shade. Have not put on a coat yet. Wear thin stockings, or socks, waistcoat with sleeves, and neckcloth.

"27th.—Rain. Warm; 58 degrees in the shade. *Put on coat, black hat, and black shoes.*

"28th.—Fine day. 56 degrees in the shade. Pulled up a radish that weighed 12 pounds!!! (prodigious!) I say twelve, and measured two feet five inches round, from common English seed. (Cobbett should have brought this radish with him to England, in the same chest as Paine's bones, one, at all events, would have been as *great* a curiosity as the other.)

The beginning of November was beautifully fine, and having given us the state of the weather for every day up to the 7th, Cobbett says of that day, "Most beautiful weather, 63 degrees in the shade." But for fear his readers should have forgotten it, he closes his remarks on that day with the following notice. "N.B.—*This is November!*"

"November 11th.—Very fine. When I got up this morning, I found the thermometer hanging on the locust trees, dripping with dew, at 62 degrees. *Left off my coat again.*"

To the 22nd of December, we have no other information than that it "rained very hard" one day, and froze "very sharp indeed" on another; on the 22nd it was so sharp that "*it makes us run where we used to walk in the fall, and to saunter in the Summer.* It is no new thing to *me*, but it makes our other English people shrug up their shoulders.

"24th.—A thaw. Servants made a lot of candles from mutton and beef fat, reserving the coarser parts to make soap.

"25th.—Rain. Had some English friends. *Surloin of own beef.* Spent the evening in light of own candles, as *handsome as I ever saw*, and I think *the very best I ever saw*. (candles made on the 24th and used on the 25th must, we guess, be somewhat new,) The reason is, that the tallow is fresh, and that it is unmixed with grease, which, and staleness is (are) the cause, I believe, of candles *running*, and

plaguing us while we are using them. What an injury is it to the farmers in England, that they dare not in this way use their own produce. Is it not a mockery to call a man free, who no more dares turn out his tallow into candles for his own use, than he dares rob a man on the highway? Yet it is only by means of tyranny and extortion like this, that the hellish system of funding and of seat-selling can be upheld.

“January 4th.—A frost that makes us jump and skip like larks. Very seasonable for a sluggish fellow. *Prepared* for Winter. Patched up a boarded building, which was formerly a coach house, but which is not so necessary to me in that capacity as in that of a fowl house. The neighbours tell me the poultry will roost out on the trees all the Winter, which, the weather being so dry in Winter, is very likely, and *indeed, they must, if they have no house*, which is almost universally the case. However, I mean to give the poor things a choice. I have lined the said coach house with corn stalks and leaves of trees, and have tacked up cedar boughs to hold the lining to the boards, and have laid a bed of leaves a foot thick all over the floor. I have secured all against dogs, and have made ladders for the fowls to go in at holes six feet from the ground. I have made pigstyes, lined round with cedar boughs and well covered. A sheepyard for a score of ewes to have lambs in Spring, surrounded with a hedge of cedar boughs, and with a shed for the ewes to lie under, *if they like*. The oxen and cows are tied up in a stall. The dogs have a place well covered and lined with corn stalks and leaves. And now I can without anxiety sit by the fire or lie in bed and hear the north-wester whistle.”

We will here, for a short time, discontinue this egotistical Journal of Cobbett, to give an account of the visit, already briefly alluded to, which was paid him by Mr. Fearon, who had been sent to America by thirteen families, as their agent, to ascertain what part of the United States would be suitable for a residence. This traveller committed a most unpardonable offence against Cobbett, of too deep a dye ever to be forgiven, for having ventured to expose the condition of his

farm at Long Island, as ruinous, dilapidated, and badly managed, when at the same time, he was holding forth to the good people in England, that there was not a farm in Long Island, nor indeed in America, which could vie with his in cleanliness, judgment, and general agricultural skill.

"I went," says Mr. Fearon "to Long Island, for the purpose of visiting Mr. Cobbett, at Hyde Park Farm, which is 18 miles distant from the city. I had no previous personal knowledge of Mr. Cobbett, nor had I letters of introduction to him, but believing that he could give information and advice concerning America, and also feeling a strong desire to see a character so celebrated, I resolved to forego the usual prerequisite in calling upon a stranger. The conveyance from the city (New York) to Brooklyn on Long Island, is by a steam ferry boat: the east river, at the point, is about one third wider than the Thames at Greenwich. Horses and carriages are driven into the boat, those, who ride seldom dismounting. In order that I might be in time for the stage, I did not go to my lodgings for dinner, supposing that as Brooklyn was a place of considerable population, I should find no difficulty in obtaining an article so necessary for a traveller. I found there several places of public entertainment, the signs and outward appearance of which bespoke a similarity to English taverns. The first into which I went had one large public room, without a table, or I believe a chair, with a bar railed off like a prison. The inhabitant of this department, was not dissimilar to many of his countrymen; tall, thin, yellow, cold, suspicious, and silent. At this place I did not venture to make known my wants. I passed several others, before I presumed to make a second attempt, when I did so, it was at "a tavern and hotel;" the bar was like the one before described, but there was the convenience of a private room, the floor of which was covered with a neat and economical species of carpet, of domestic manufacture. I made known my wants to the landlady, saying that I was not at all particular, and should be glad of any thing she had in the house, she walked on to her bar, answering without looking

at me 'I guess we have got no food for strangers; we do not practice those things at this house, I guess.' The stage was ready; the driver informed me that he would take me to Wiggin's inn a distance of about four miles from Mr. Cobbett's. The vehicle was a kind of light farmer's wagon, with three seats, carrying two persons each; there was no covering, and of course a want of protection from the weather, which at this time was oppressively severe."

We have already slightly hinted at the feelings of Mr. Fearon on approaching Cobbett's house, and the description of which, such as "a path rarely trod—fences in ruins—the gate broken—a house mouldering to decay," roused at a future period all the acerbity of Cobbett's disposition, and exposed his unlucky visiter, who could publish his imperfections as a farmer to the world, to the unmitigated severity of his merciless lash. "I would fain," continues Mr. Fearon, "have returned without entering the *wooden mansion*, imagining that its possessor would exclaim, "What intruding fellow is here coming to break in upon my pursuits? But these difficulties ceased almost with their existence. A female servant (an Englishwoman) informed me that her master was from home, attending at the county court. Her language was natural enough for a person in her situation; she pressed me to walk in, being quite certain that I was her countryman, and she was so delighted to see an Englishman, instead of these nasty guessing Yankies. Following my guide through the kitchen (the floor of which, she asserted, was embedded with two feet of dirt when Mr Cobbett came there, it having been previously in the occupation of the Americans) I was conducted to a front parlour, *which contained but a single chair* and several trunks of sea clothes.

"A French gentleman, whom I found in the house, residing with Mr. Cobbett, interested me much by his character and conversation. He had been in the suite of Napoleon and came over with Santini. At half past eight in the evening Mr. Cobbett had not returned. My design was to walk back to Wiggin's inn. The idea, however, I abandoned on the

recommendation of an English servant, who as it proved knew little of the country. He conducted me to the road side, directing me to proceed in a direction opposite to that, which led to Wiggins', stating that in about one hundred yards distance I should see a tavern. My walk extended for many hundred yards distance, but no human habitation appeared. I proceeded at a slow and thoughtful pace, willing to foster a faint hope, that I might yet arrive at a tavern. A house appeared, but it was a private one, and all were gone to bed. At length, to my great joy, I saw a light at a considerable distance; it proved to come from a hut by the road side, upon my approach to the door, a dog jumped out; when he was partially silenced, I enquired for a public house; none was near: this habitation belonged to an old woman, who once kept what is here called a tavern. After the repetition of my request, she answered, by desiring to know, 'What do you want with a public house? What is your name? Where were you raised? Where are you going? You are from York (New York) I guess? You want a bed I guess? Now I guess if you be not a *hard character*, I will let you have elegant lodgings, I guess?' I accepted the offer with a combination of fear and gladness. The old lady still sells liquors. Her present stock is contained in three dirty bottles carefully preserved in a corner cupboard. At the moment of my entrance, she was supplying a black pedlar with a glass of New England, or what is here denominated Yankee rum. The old lady's witch-like appearance, and the cast of character of her guest, were strong drawbacks upon my desire for repose. The pair seemed living portraits of Dirk Hattarick and Meg Merrilies; they looked really terrific. I seated myself, and was buried in physiognomical research, when the man, holding a candle in my face, exclaimed, 'she wants to look at you.' When I had passed my examination, the old woman withdrew to prepare a bed; her guest continued drinking, giving me a great many winks and nods, and saying, 'how wealthy the old baggage was.' I was heartily glad to find

that this sable hero was not to be an occupant of the same house as myself. As the old lady conducted me to an apartment, she apologized for the passage to it being through a room in which were an entire family strewed over the floor. The wretchedness and poverty of my chamber must remain undescribed.

“ Before seven o'clock on the following morning, I regained Mr. Cobbett's. His servant conducted me into a room, in which he was writing, with his coat off. The first question was, ‘ Are you an American, sir ?’ then, what were my objects in the United States ? was I acquainted with the friends of liberty in London ? How long I had left ? &c. He was immediately familiar. I was pleasingly disappointed with the general tone of his manners. His sons, particularly the second, are genteel young men. Of their talents, I had no opportunity to form a judgment. Mr. Cobbett thinks meanly of the American people, but spoke highly of the economy of their government. He does not advise persons in respectable circumstances to emigrate, even in the present state of England. In his opinion, a man who can but barely live upon their property will more consult their happiness by not removing to the United States. He almost laughs at Mr. Birkbeck's settling in the western country. This being the first time I had seen this well-known character, I viewed him with no ordinary degree of interest. A print by Bartolozzi, executed in 1801, conveys a correct outline of his person. His eyes are small, and pleasingly good-natured. To the French gentleman, he was attentive ; with all his sons familiar, to his servants easy, but to all in his tone and manners resolute and determined. *He feels no hesitation in praising himself*, and evidently believes that he is eventually destined to be the Atlas of the British nation. His faculty of relating anecdotes is amusing.

“ My impressions of Mr. Cobbett are, that those who know him would like him, if *they can be content to submit unconditionally to his dictation. Obey me, and I will treat you kindly, if you do not, I will trample on you*, seemed

visible in every word and feature. He appears to feel in its fullest force the sentiment,

“ I have no brother—am like no brother—
I am myself alone.”

“ Mr. Cobbett complained of the difficulty of obtaining labourers, at a price by which the agriculturist could realize a profit, so much so that he conceives that a farmer in America cannot support himself, unless he has sons, who with himself, will labour with their own hands. He had contracted with a man to do his mowing, the terms were an equal division of the produce. Mr. Cobbett took me round his grounds. The contractor complained that even half the hay, for merely his labour, was a hard bargain. With pleasing sensations I departed from Mr. Cobbett's residence, and most willingly express my obligation to him for a reception generous and liberal.”

We will now exhibit the manner in which Cobbett treats this Mr. Fearon, whom, although there was some justice mingled with the absurdity of his description of Cobbett and his residence, he could not forgive, nor could he abstain from revenging himself upon the author, and that too in his often-adopted style of hard hitting, and coarse invective. As soon as he heard that Fearon had published an account of his visit to Long Island, he writes an article, which he commences with a bitter adducement of the evidence of his housekeeper, Mary Churcher, (the Englishwoman) against the personal appearance of the gentleman, who had made free with his own. It is quite in the “kick for a bite” style.

“ It is unlucky for this blade,” Cobbett begins, “ that the parties are alive. First, let the Englishwoman speak for herself, which she does in these words, ‘ I remember that about a week after I came to Hyde Park in 1817, a man came to the house in the evening, when Mr. Cobbett was out, and that he came again the next morning. I never knew nor asked what countryman he was. He came to the back door, I first gave him a chair in a back room ; but as he was

a slippery-looking young man, and as it was growing late, my husband thought it was best to bring him down into the kitchen, where he staid till he went away. I had no talk with him. I could not know what condition Mr. Cobbett found the house in, for I did not come there till the middle of August. I never heard whether the gentleman that lived here before Mr. Cobbett was an American or not. I never in my life said a word against the people or the country. I am very glad I came to it. I am doing very well in it, and have found as good and as kind friends amongst the Americans as I ever had in all my life.

‘MARY ANNE CHURCHER.’”

After this declaration, which flatly contradicts a great part of Mr. Fearon's statement, Cobbett on his own account attacks that gentleman, in a manner for which he will not hold himself highly indebted to him.

“Mrs. Churcher,” says Cobbett, “puts me in mind that I asked her what sort of a *looking man* it was, and that she said, he looked like an *exciseman*, and that Churcher exclaimed, ‘Why you fool, they don’t have any *excisemen* and such fellows here.’ I never was at a county court in America in my life. I was out a *shooting*. As to the house, it is a better one than he ever entered, except as a lodger, a servant, or to *carry home work*. The path, so far from being trackless, was as beaten as the highway. The gentleman who lived here before me was an Englishman, whose name was Crow. But only think of dirt, *two feet deep in a kitchen!* All is false. The house was built by Judge Ludlow, it is large and very sound and commodious. The avenue of trees before it, the most beautiful I ever saw, the orchard, the fine shade, and fine grass all about the house; the abundant garden, the beautiful turnip field, the whole subject worthy of admiration, and not a single drawback. A hearty unostentatious welcome from me and my sons. A breakfast, such probably as this fellow will never eat again: I leave the public to guess whether it be likely, that I should give a chap like

this my opinions about government or people, just as if I did not know the people. Just as if they were *new* to me. The man was not in the house half an hour in the morning, judge then, what he could know of my manners and character. He was a long time afterwards at New York, would he not have been here a *second* time, if I had been familiar enough to *relate anecdotes* to him? Such blades are not backward in renewing their visits, whenever they get but a little encouragement. He in another part of the extracts that I have seen, complains of the *reserve* of the American ladies. *No social intercourse*, he says, between the sexes, that is to say, he could find none. I'll engage he could not, amongst the *whites* at least. It is hardly possible for me to talk about the public affairs of England, and not to talk of some of my own acts, *but is it not monstrous to suppose, that I should praise myself*, and show that I believed myself destined to be the Atlas of the British nation, in my conversation of a few minutes with an entire stranger; and that too, a blade whom I took for a decent tailor, my son William, for a shop-keeper's clerk, and Mrs. Churcher, with less charity, for a *slippery young man*, or at best, for an *exciseman*? as I said before, such a man can know nothing of the people of America. He has no channel through which to *get at them*, and indeed, why should he? Can he go into the families of people at home? Not he, indeed, beyond his own low circle. Why should he do it here then? The black woman's hut indeed, he might force himself into with impunity; sixpence would secure him a reception there, but it would be a shame, indeed, *if such a man* could be admitted to unreserved interviews with American ladies. Slippery as he was, he could not slide into their good graces, and into the possession of their father's soul-subduing dollars, and so he is gone home to **CURSE THE NASTY GUESSING AMERICANS.**"

It is by no means probable that Mr. Fearon, after this castigation from Cobbett, ever ventured to speak again of "fences in ruins,—of gates broken,—of a house mouldering to decay." and especially "of dirt two feet deep in the kitchen,"

whenever he had to write of his visit to Long Island, at the same time, it must be admitted that the abuse, which Cobbett throws upon Mr. Fearon was void of all candour and liberality. It is by no means a difficult task to load a man with obloquy and vituperation, but the question thence arises, does he deserve it? Cobbett adduces not a single proof that Mr. Fearon was in any degree the character as represented by him, or that by any of his actions he was deserving of those opprobrious epithets, which Cobbett so profusely bestows upon him. We must also candidly confess, that we do not hold the veracity of Mr. Cobbett in such very high estimation, as utterly to reject and discard the allegations of others, and attach our unqualified belief to whatever he himself asserts. Mr. Fearon had touched him upon a most vulnerable point, for with the opinion which Cobbett entertained of himself in all matters relating to the management of a farm, not only in its practical details, but in all its subordinate departments, no greater or more severe wound could be inflicted upon him, than to impugn his character on that head, and hence the cause of that scurrility and abuse, with which Cobbett visited his offending countryman. It may be monstrous in the opinion of Cobbett, for him to praise himself, but, short as may have been the interview which Mr. Fearon had with Cobbett, it cannot be denied, that he caught hold of one trait of his character, which is too fully displayed in all his actions and writings, to question its existence for a moment. On the whole, we think the abuse which Cobbett bestows upon Mr. Fearon to be undeserved, and that revenge had more to do in it, than a sense of justification, or a love of truth.

To return to the Journal, the 10th January, Mr. Cobbett set off on his journey to Pennsylvania, having for his object, an appeal to the justice of the legislature of that state for redress, on account of the great loss and injury sustained by him in consequence of the tyranny of one Mc'Kean, who was then the chief justice of that state. As it might be expected, the appeal was unsuccessful, and certainly it was no proof of the judgement or prudence of Mr. Cobbett to undertake a

task, which from the beginning he must have regarded as hopeless.

On his arrival at Philadelphia, the question put to him by every one was "Don't you think the city greatly improved?" On which Cobbett makes the following remarks "They seem to me to confound *augmentation* with *improvement*. It always was a fine city, since I first knew it, and it is very greatly augmented. It has, I believe, nearly double its extent and number of houses since the year 1799. But after being for so long a time familiar with London, every other place appears little. After living within a few hundred yards of Westminster Hall, and the Abbey Church, and the Bridge, and looking from my own windows into St. James's Park, all other buildings and spots appear mean and insignificant. I went to day to see the house I formerly occupied. How small! it is always thus; the words *large* and *small* are carried about with us in our minds, and we forget real dimensions. The idea, *such as it was received*, remains during our absence from the object. When I returned to England in 1800, after an absence from the country parts of it, of sixteen years, the trees, the hedges, even the parks and woods seemed *so small*. It made me laugh to hear little gutters that I could jump over, called *rivers*. The Thames was but a creek. But when in about a month after my arrival in London I went to Farnham, the place of my birth, what was my surprise. Every thing was become so pitifully small. I had to cross in my post-chaise, the long and dreary heath of Bagshot, then at the end of it to mount a hill called Hungry Hill, and from that hill, I knew I should look down into the beautiful fertile vale of Farnham. My heart fluttered with impatience, mixed with a sort of fear, to see all the scenes of my child-hood, for I had learnt before, the death of my father and mother. There is a hill not far from the town called Crooksbury Hill, which rises up out of a flat, in the form of a cone, and is planted with Scotch fir trees. Here I used to take the eggs and young ones of crows and magpies. This hill was a famous object in the neighbourhood. It

served as the superlative degree of height 'as high as Crooksbury Hill' meant with us, the utmost degree of height. Therefore the first object that my eyes sought for was this hill. *I could not believe my eyes*, literally speaking, I for a moment thought the famous hill removed and a little heap put in its stead, for I had seen in New Brunswick a single rock or hill of solid rock, ten times as big, and four or five times as high. The post boy going down hill, and not a bad road, whisked me in a few minutes to the Bush Inn, from the gardens of which I could see the *prodigious* sand hill, where I had begun my gardening works. What a *nothing*! But now came rushing into my mind all at once, my pretty little garden, my little blue smock frock, my little nailed shoes, my pretty pigeons, that I used to feed out of my own hands; the last kind words and tears of my gentle, and tender-hearted, and affectionate mother! I hastened back into the room. If I had looked a moment longer, I should have dropped. When I came to reflect *what a change!* I looked down at my dress. What a change! What scenes I had gone through. How altered my state; I had dined the day before at a Secretary of State's, in company with Mr. Pitt, and had been waited upon by men in gaudy liveries. I had nobody to assist me in the world. No teachers of any sort. Nobody to shelter me from the consequence of bad, and no one to counsel me to good behaviour. I **FELT PROUD**. The distinctions of birth, rank, and wealth all became nothing in my eyes, and from that moment (less than a month after my arrival in England) I resolved never to bend before them."

Speaking of the Philadelphians, Mr. Cobbett says, "They are cleanly, a quality which they owe chiefly to the Quakers. But after being long and recently familiar with the towns in Surrey and Hampshire, and especially with Guildford, Alton and Southampton, no other towns appear clean and neat, not even Bath or Salisbury, which last is much about upon a par in point of cleanliness with Philadelphia, and Salisbury is deemed a very clean place. Blandford and Dorchester are clean, but I have never seen any thing like the towns in

Surrey and Hampshire. If a Frenchman born and bred *could* be taken up and carried blindfold to Guildford, I wonder what his sensations would be, when he came to have use of *his sight*, every thing near Guildford seems to have received an influence from the town. Hedges, gates, stiles, gardens, *houses*, inside and out, and the dresses of the people. The market day at Guildford is a perfect show of cleanliness. Not even a carter without a clean smock frock, and closely shaven and clean washed face. Well may Mr. Birkbeck, who came from this spot, think the people dirty in the western country. I'll engage, he finds more dirt upon the necks and faces of one family of his present neighbours, than he left behind him upon the skins of all the people in the three parishes of Guildford. However, he would not have found this to be the case in Pennsylvania, and especially in those parts where the Quakers abound, and I am told that in New England States, the people are as cleanly and as neat as they are in England. The sweetest flowers, when they become putrid, stink the most, and *a nasty woman is the nastiest thing in nature.*

On the 26th Cobbett arrives at Harrisburgh, but on the 27th he was tired to death of the tavern there, although a very good one. "The cloth spread three times a day, fish, fowl, meat, cakes, eggs, sausages, all sorts of things in abundance. Board, lodging, *civil*, but not *servile* waiting on, beer, tea, coffee, chocolate; price, a dollar and a quarter a day. Here we meet altogether, senators, judges, lawyers, tradesmen, farmers and all. I am weary of the everlasting loads of meat. *Weary of being idle.* How few such days have I spent in my whole life.

"28th. My business not coming on, I went to a country tavern, hoping there to get a room to myself, in which to read my English papers, and sit down to writing. I am now at Mc'Allister's tavern, situated at the foot of the first ridge of mountains, or rather upon a little nook of land, close to the river, where the river has found its way through a break in the chain of mountains. Great enjoyment here;

sit and read and write. My mind is again in England. Mrs. Mc'Allister just suits me, does not pester me with questions; does not cram me with meat; lets me eat and drink what I like, and gives mugs of nice milk.

" 31st. Two farmers of Lycoming county had heard that WILLIAM COBBETT was here, they modestly introduced themselves. What a contrast with the *yeomanry cavalry*!

" February 4th. This day thirty three years ago, I enlisted as a soldier—I always keep the day in recollection.

" 11th. Went back again to Harrisburgh.

" 12th. Not being able to bear the idea of *dancing attendance*, came (went?) to Lancaster in order to see more of this pretty town. A very fine tavern. Room to myself. Excellent accommodations. *Warm* fires. Good and clean beds. Civil but not servile landlord; the eating still more over-done than at Harrisburgh. Never saw such profusion. I have made a bargain with the landlord, he is to give me a dish of chocolate a day, *instead of dinner*.

" 13th. A *real* rain, but rather cold.

" 15th. A hard frost, much about like a hard frost in the naked parts of Wiltshire. Mr. Hulme joined me on his way from the the city of Washington to Philadelphia.

" 16th. Lancaster is a pretty place. No *fine* buildings, but no *mean* ones. Nothing splendid and nothing beggarly. The people of this town seem to have had the prayer of Hagar granted them, 'Give me, O Lord, neither poverty nor riches.' Here are none of those poor wretched habitations, which sicken the sight at the outskirts of cities and towns in England, those abodes of the poor creatures, who have been reduced to beggary by the cruel extortions of the rich and powerful. And this remark applies to all the towns of America that I have ever seen. This is a fine part of America. *Big barns* and modest dwelling houses, *barns of stone*, a *hundred feet long*, and *forty wide*, with two floors and raised roads to go into them, so that the wagons go into the *first floor up stairs*; below are stables, stalls, pens and all sorts of conveniences. Upstairs are rooms for threshed corn and grain, for tackle,

for meal, for all sorts of things. In the front (south) of the barn is the cattle yard. These are very fine buildings, and then all about them looks so comfortable, and gives such manifest proofs of ease, plenty, and happiness. Such is the country of William Penn's settling! It is a curious thing to observe the farm houses in this country. They consist almost without exception of a considerably large and a very neat house, with sash windows, and of a *small house*, which seems to have been *tacked on to* the large one, and the proportion they bear to each other in point of dimensions is as nearly as possible, the proportion of size between a cow and her calf, the latter a month old. But as to the cause, the process has been the opposite of this instance of the works of nature, *for it is the large house, which has grown out of the small one*. The father or grandfather, while he was toiling for his children, lived in the small house, constructed chiefly by himself, and consisting of rude materials. The means accumulated in the small house, enabled the son to rear the large one, and though, when *pride* enters the door, the small house is sometimes demolished. Few sons in America have the folly or want of feeling to commit such acts of filial ingratitude and of real self-abasement. For what inheritance so valuable and so honourable can a son enjoy as the proofs of his father's industry and virtue? The progress of wealth, and ease, and enjoyment, evinced by this regular increase of the size of the farmers' dwellings, is a spectacle, at once pleasing in a very high degree in itself, and in the same degree it speaks the praise of the system of government, under which it has taken place. What a contrast with the farm houses in England! There the *little* farms are falling into ruins, or are actually become cattle sheds, or at best *cottages*, as they are called, to contain a miserable labourer, who ought to have been a farmer, as his grandfather. Five or six farms are there levelled into one, in defiance of the law, for there is a law to prevent it. The farmer has indeed a *fine house*, but what a life do his labourers lead. The cause of this sad change is to be found in the crushing taxes; and the cause of them

in the borough usurpation, which has robbed the people of their best right, and indeed without which right, they can enjoy no other. They talk of the augmented population of England, and when it suits the purposes of the tyrants, they boast of this fact, as they are pleased to call it, as a proof of the fostering nature of their government; though just now, they are preaching up the vile and foolish doctrine of Parson Malthus, who thinks there are too many people, and that they ought, those, who labour at least, to be restrained from breeding so fast. But as to the fact, I do not believe it. There can be nothing in the shape of proof, for no actual enumeration was ever taken till the year 1800. We know well that London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bath, Portsmouth, Plymouth, and all Lancashire and Yorkshire, and some other counties have got a vast increase of miserable beings, huddled together. But look at Devonshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire and other counties. You will there see hundreds of thousands of acres of land, where the old marks of the plough are visible, but which have not been cultivated, perhaps, for half a century. You will there see places, that were once considerable towns and villages, now having within their ancient limits, nothing but a few cottages, the *parsonage* and a *single farm house*. It is a curious and melancholy sight, where an ancient church, with its lofty spire or tower, the church sufficient to contain a thousand or two or three thousand of people conveniently, now stands surrounded by a score or half a score of miserable mud houses, with floors of earth and covered with thatch; and this sight strikes your eye in all parts of the five western counties of England. Surely these churches were not built without the existence of a population somewhat proportionate to their size, certainly not, for the churches are of various sizes, and we sometimes see them very small indeed. Let any man look at the sides of the hills, in these countries and also in Hampshire, where downs or open lands prevail. He will there see, not only that these hills were formerly cultivated, but that banks from distance to distance were made

by the spade, in order to form little flats for the plough to go to, without tumbling the earth down the hill, so that the side of a hill looks in some sort, like the steps of a stairs. Was this done without hands, and without mouths to consume the grain raised on the sides of these hills? The funding, and manufacturing, and commercial, and taxing system has, by drawing wealth into great masses, drawn men also into great masses. London, the manufacturing places, Bath and other places of dissipation have, indeed, wonderfully increased in population. Country-seats, parks, pleasure-gardens, have in like degree increased in number and extent, and in just the same proportion has been the increase of poor-houses, mad-houses and jails. But the people of England, such as Fortescue described them, have been swept away by the ruthless hand of the aristocracy, who making their approaches by slow degrees, have at last got into their grasp the substance of the whole country.

“ 19th. Quitted Harrisburg very much *displeased*, but on this subject, I shall, if possible, keep silence till next year, and until the people of Pennsylvania have had time to reflect; to clearly understand my affair, and when they do *understand* it, I am not at all afraid, of receiving justice at their hands, whether I be present or absent.

“ 20th. Arrived at Philadelphia with my friend HULME. They are roasting an ox on the Delaware. The fooleries of England are copied here, and every where in this country, with wonderful avidity, and I wish I could say, that some of the vices of our HIGHER ORDERS, as they have the *impudence* to call themselves, were not also imitated. However I look principally at the mass of farmers, the *sensible* and happy farmers of America.

“ February 28th. *Very warm*. I hate this weather. Hot upon my back, and melting ice under my feet. The people, those who have been lazy, are chopping away with axes the ice, which has grown out of the snows and rains before their doors during the winter. The hogs, those best of scavengers, are very busy in the streets, seeking out the bones and bits of

of meat, which have been flung out and frozen down amidst water and snow, during the two foregoing months. At New York, and I think at Philadelphia also they have corporation laws to prevent hogs from being in the streets. For *what reason* I know not, except putrid meat be pleasant to the smell of the inhabitants. But corporations are seldom the wisest of law makers. It is argued, that if there were no hogs in the streets, people would not throw out the orts of flesh and vegetable. Indeed! what would they do with these orts then? Make their hired servants eat them? The very proposition would leave them to cook and wash for themselves. Where then are they to fling these effects of superabundance? Just before I left New York for Philadelphia, I saw a sow very comfortably dining upon a full quarter part of what appeared to have been a fine leg of mutton. How many a family in England would, if within reach, have seized this meat from the sow. And are the tyrants who have brought my industrious countrymen to that horrid state of misery never to be called to account? Are they *always* to carry it as they do now? Every object almost that strikes my view sends my mind and heart back to England. In viewing the ease and happiness of this people, the contrast fills my soul with indignation, and makes it more and more the object of my life to assist in the destruction of the diabolical usurpation, which has trampled on king as well as people.

“March 1st. Dined with my old friend Severne, an honest Norfolk man, who used to carry his milk about the streets, when I first knew him, but who is now a man of considerable property, and like a wise man, lives in the same *modest* house, where he formerly lived. Excellent roast beef and plum pudding. At his house I found an Englishman, and from Botley too. I had been told of such a man being in Philadelphia, and that man said he had *heard of me*, ‘*heard of such a gentleman, but did not know much of him,*’ THIS WAS ODD!! I was desirous of seeing this man. Mr. Severne got him to his house. His name is VERE. I knew him the moment I saw him, and I wondered *why* it was that *he knew so little*

of me! I found that he wanted work, and that he had been assisted by some society in Philadelphia. He said, he was *lame*, and he might be a little perhaps. I offered him work at once. No: he wanted to have the care of a farm. Go said I, for shame, and ask some farmers for work. You will find it immediately, and with good wages. What should the people in this country see in your face to induce them to keep you in idleness. They did not send for you. You are a young man, and you come from a country of able labourers. You may be rich, if you will work. This gentleman who is about to cram you with roast beef and plum pudding came to this city nearly as poor as you are, and I first came to this country in no better plight. Work and I wish you well, be idle, and you ought to starve. He told me, that he was a *hoop-maker*, and yet observe, he wanted to have the care of a farm. This man being from Botley, I had every inclination to serve him; indeed, I have a pleasure in thinking of all my Botley neighbours, *except the parson*, who for their sakes, I wish, however, was my neighbour *now*, for here he might pursue his calling very *quietly*,

“ 2nd. Went to Bustleton, after having seen Messrs. Stevens and Penrill, and advised them to forward to me affidavits of what they knew about Oliver, the spy of the Boroughmongers.

“ 13th. Here I am amongst the thick of the Quakers, whose houses and families pleased me so much formerly, and which pleasure is now all revived. Here all is ease, plenty, and cheerfulness. These people are never *giggling*, and never in *low spirits*. Their minds like their dress, are simple and strong. Their kindness is shown more in acts than in words. Let others say what they will, I have uniformly found those whom I have intimately known of this sect, sincere and upright men: and I verily believe that all those charges of hypocrisy and craft, that we hear against Quakers, arise from a feeling of *envy*; envy inspired by seeing them possessed of such abundance of all those things, which are the *fair* fruits of care, industry, economy, sobriety, and order; and

which are justly forbidden to the drunkard, the prodigal, and the lazy. As the day of my coming to Mr. Townshend's had been announced before hand, several of the young men, who were babies when I used to be there formerly, came to see 'BILLY CORBETT,' of whom they had heard and read so much. When I saw them and heard them, 'What a contrast,' said I to myself, 'with the senseless, gaudy, hectoring, insolent, and cruel yeomanry cavalry in England, who, while they grind their labourers into the revolt of starvation, gallantly salty forth with their sabres to chop them down at the command of a Secretary of State, and who the next moment creep and fawn like spaniels before their boroughmonger landlords.' At Mr. Townshend's I saw a man in his service lately from Yorkshire, but an Irishman by birth. *He wished to have an opportunity to see me.* He had read many of my 'little books.' I shook him by the hand, told him he had now got a good house over his head, and a kind employer, and advised him not to move for one year, and to save his wages during that year.

" 11th. I am now at Trenton in New Jersey, waiting for something to carry me on to New York. Yesterday Mr. Townshend sent me on under an escort of Quakers to Mr. Anthony Taylor's. He was formerly a merchant in Philadelphia, and now lives in his very pretty country house, on a very beautiful farm. Here my escort quitted me, but luckily Mr. Newbold, who lives about ten miles nearer Trenton than Mr. Taylor does, brought me on to his house. He is a much better gardener, or rather, to speak the truth, *has succeeded a better*, whose example he has followed in part. I saw in Mr. Taylor's service another man recently arrived from England. A Yorkshire man. *He, too, wished to see me.* He had got some of my 'little books,' which he had preserved, and brought out with him. Mr. Taylor came this morning to Mr. Newbold's, and brought me on to Trenton. I am at the stage tavern, where I have just dined upon cold ham, cold veal, ~~butter~~ and cheese, and a peach pie, nice clean room, well d. waiter clean and attentive, *plenty of milk!* and the

charge a quarter of a dollar ; I thought the other tavern-keepers were low enough in all conscience, but really this charge of Mrs. Anderson's beats them all. *I had not the face to pay the waiter a quarter of a dollar, but gave him half a dollar, and told him to keep the change !!!* He is a black man. He thanked me. But they never *ask* for any thing. But my vehicle is now come, and now I bid adieu to Trenton, which I should have liked better, if I had not seen so many young fellows lounging about the streets, and leaning against door-posts, with quids of tobacco in their mouths, or segars stuck between their lips, and with dirty hands and faces. Mr. Birkbeck's complaint on this score is perfectly just.

"BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY. Here I am, after a ride of about 30 miles, since two o'clock, in what is called a Jersey wagon, through such mud as I never saw before. Up to the stock of the wheel, and yet a pair of very little horses have dragged us through it in the space of five hours. The best horses and driver, and the worst roads I ever set my eyes on. This part of Jersey is a sad spectacle, after leaving the brightest of all the bright parts of Pennsylvania. My driver, who is a tavern keeper himself, would have been a very pleasant companion, if he had not drunk so much spirits on the road, This is the great misfortune of America. As we were going up a hill very slowly, I could perceive him looking very hard at my cheek for some time. At last he said, 'I am wondering, sir, to see you look so *fresh* and so young, *considering what you have gone through in the world,*' though I cannot imagine *how* he had learnt who I was. 'I'll tell you,' said I, 'how I have contrived the thing. *I rise early, go to bed early, eat sparingly, never drink any thing stronger than small beer, shave once a day, and wash my hands and face clean three times a day at the very least.*' He said that was *too much* to think of doing.

"March 12th. Like an English first of May in point of warmth. I got to Elizabeth Town through beds of mud. Twenty minutes too late for the steam boat. Have to wait here at the tavern till to-morrow. Great mortification. Sup-

ped with a Connecticut farmer, who was taking on his daughter to Little York in Pennsylvania. The rest of his family he took on in the fall. This Yankey (the inhabitants of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire only are called Yankeys,) was about the age of Sir Francis Burdett, and if he had been dressed in the usual clothes of Sir Francis, would have passed for him. Features, hair, height, make, manner, look, hasty utterance at times, musical voice, frank deportment, pleasant smile. All the very fac-simile of him. (The following is truly Cobbettish.) I had some early York cabbage seed, and some cauliflower seed in my pocket, which had been sent me from London in a letter, and which had reached me at Harrisburg. *I could not help giving him a little of each.*" The transmission of a little early York cabbage seed from London to Long Island in a letter, which might have been purchased at any of the seed shops in New York for a penny, and the quantity which Cobbett was enabled to give the Connecticut Yankey from the said letter, invest the whole of the transaction with such a degree of bombastical egotism, as to throw over it a positive air of ridicule.

" 13th. Came to New York by the steam boat. Over to this island (Long Island) by another, took a light little wagon, that *whisked* me home over roads as dry and as smooth as gravel walks in an English bishop's garden in the month of July (Why particularly the walks in a bishop's garden? Cobbett was not generally in the habit of eulogising the *ways* and *paths* of the bishops.)

" 15th. *Young chickens*. I hear of no other in the neighbourhood. This is the effect of my warm fowl house. The house has been supplied with eggs all the winter without any interruption. *I am told that this has been the case at no other house hereabouts.** We have now an abundance of eggs.

* Cobbett frequently takes upon himself the character of a critic on the style of other writers, and perhaps no one was more in fault than himself. The passage to which this note refers is given as a specimen of the inaccuracy of his style, and which exhibits itself in almost all his writings. The passage should have been written thus—"I am told that this has not been the case, in any other house hereabouts."

More than a large family can consume. The fowls, I find, have wanted no feeding, except during the snow, or in the very, very cold days; *they did not come out of their house all the day; a certain proof that they like the warmth.*

"20th. Opened several pits, in which I had preserved all sorts of garden plants, and roots, and apples. Valuable experiments, as useful in England as here, though not so absolutely necessary.

"21st. The day like a fine May day in England. I am writing without fire, and in my waistcoat without coat.

"23rd. Mild and fine. A sow *had a litter of pigs in the leaves under the trees.* (A strong proof of Mr. Cobbett's good management) Judge of the weather by this. The wind blows cold, but she has drawn together great heaps of leaves, and protects her young ones with surprising sagacity and exemplary care and fondness.

"26th. Very cold wind. We try to get the sow and pigs into the buildings (a careful vigilant farmer would have got the sow there before she farrowed) but the pigs do not follow, and we cannot with all our temptations of corn and all our caresses get the sow to move without them by her side. She must remain, till they choose to travel. (It is an admitted truism, that a moral is to be deduced from apparently the most trivial subjects, and therefore the mothers of England must acknowledge their obligations to Cobbett in furnishing them with one from the conduct and behaviour of his sow.) How, says Cobbett, does nature, through the conduct of this animal, reproach those mothers, who cast off their new-born infants to depend on a hireling's breast." On this subject Mr. Cobbett recommends two books to every *young man* before he marries, the one is the *pretty* poem of Mr. Roscoe called, 'The Nurse,' and the other, wonderful to say, is Rousseau's *Emilius*, a work which in the precepts which it inculcates on the systems of education, is as opposite to the plans adopted and recommended by Cobbett, as the methods pursued by Parr and Hamilton. The time of a young man previously

to marriage, spent in the perusal of Roscoe's Nurse, would be just as much thrown away, as if a young woman previously to her marriage were to study Kant's Transcendental Philosophy.

"March 31st. Fine warm day. As the winter is now gone, let us take a look at its inconveniences compared with those of an English winter, we have had three months of it, for if we had a few days sharp in December, we have had many very fine, and without fire in March. In England, winter really begins in November, and does not end till mid March. Here we have greater cold, there four times as much wet. I have had my great coat on only twice, except when sitting in a stage travelling. I have had gloves on no oftener, *for I do not, like the clerks of the houses of borough-mongers write in gloves.* I seldom meet a wagoner with gloves or great coat on. It is generally so dry. This is the great friend of man and beast. *Last summer I wrote home for nails to nail my shoes for winter. I could find none here. What a foolish people not to have shoe nails! I forgot, that it was likely that the absence of shoe nails argued an absence of the want of them.* The nails are not come, and I have not wanted them. There is no dirt, except for about ten days at the breaking up of the frost.* The dress of a labourer, does not cost half so much as in England. This dryness is singularly favourable to all animals. They are hurt far less by *dry cold*, than warm *drip drip drip* as in England. There has been nothing *green* in the garden, that is to say *above ground* since December, but we have had all winter, and have now white cabbages *green* savoys, parsnips, carrots, beets, young onions (*green!*) radishes (*green!*) white turnips, Swedish turnips, and potatoes, and all these in abundance, and always at hand at a minute's warning."

Cobbett tells us that he had nothing green above ground

* Speaking of Long Island, Mr. Fearon says "In time of rain, this is the dirtiest place I ever was in." On the other hand, Cobbett says, "The ground sucks up all the dirt." (Quere, how?)

since December and yet in the same breath he tells us, that he has had all winter green savoy, green radishes, green young onions, and green turnip tops!!

April 18th. Cold and raw. Damp too, which is extremely rare. The worst day I have yet seen during the year; it stops the grass, stops the swelling of the buds. The young chickens hardly peep out from under the wings of the hens. The lambs don't play, but stand *kntt up*. The pigs growl and squeak, and the birds are gone away to the woods again.

"19th. Same weather with an easterly wind. Just such a wind as that which in March, brushes round the corners of the streets of London and makes the old muffled up debauchees hurry home with aching joints,

"20th. Just the weather to give drunkards the blue devils.

"25th. Went to New York. Forgot to take my shaving materials with me, hate to have my face lathered by another person. Called at a hair-dresser's in Broadway, nearly opposite the city hall, the man in the shop was a negro. He had nearly finished with me, when a black man, very respectably dressed, came into the shop and sat down. The barber inquired if he wanted the proprietor or his *Boss*, as he termed him, who was also a black, the answer was in the negative, but that he wished to have his hair cut, my man turned upon his heel, and with the greatest contempt muttered in a tone of great importance, "We do not cut coloured men here, sir." The poor fellow walked out without replying, exhibiting in his countenance, confusion, humiliation, and mortification. I immediately requested, if the refusal was on account of my being present, he might be called back. The hair-dresser was astonished. "You cannot be in earnest, sir," he said. I assured him that I was so, and that I was much concerned in witnessing the refusal from no other cause than that his skin was of a darker tinge than my own. He stopped the motion of his scissors, and after a pause of some seconds, in which his eyes were fixed upon my face, he said,

‘Why, I guess as how, sir, what you say is mightily elegant, and you’re an elegant man, but I guess you are not of these parts?’ ‘I am from England,’ said I, ‘Where we have neither so cheap nor so enlightened a government as yours, but we have no slaves.’ ‘Ay, I guessed you were not raised here, you salt water people are mightily grand to coloured people, you are not so proud, and I guess you have none to be proud of; now I reckon that you do not know that my Boss would not have a single ugly or clever gentleman come to his store, if he cut coloured men; now, my Boss, I guess, ordered me to turn out every coloured man from the store right away, and if I did not, he would send me of slick, for the slimmest gentleman in York would not come to his store, if coloured men were let in; but you know all that, sir, I guess, without my telling you; you are an *elegant gentleman*, too, sir.

“I assured him I was ignorant of the fact, which he stated, but which from the earnestness of his manner I concluded must be true.

“And you come all the way right away from England. Well! I would not have supposed, I guess, that you come from there from your tongue; you have no hardness like, I guess, in your speaking; you talk almost as well as we do, and that is what I never see, I guess, in a gentleman so lately from England. I guess your talk is within a grade as good as ours. You are a mightily elegant gentleman, and if you will tell me where you keep, I will bring some of my coloured friends to visit you. Well, you must be a smart man to come from England, and talk English *as well as we do*, that were raised in this country.’ At the dinner table I commenced a relation of this occurrence to three American gentlemen, one of whom was a doctor, the others were in the law; they were men of education and of liberal opinions. When I arrived at the point of the black being turned out, they exclaimed, ‘Aye, perfectly right, I would never go to a barber’s, where a coloured man was cut.’ Observe these gentlemen were not from the south · they were residents of

New York, and I believe were born there. I was upon the point of expressing my opinion, but withheld it, thinking it wise to look at every thing as it stood, and form a deliberate judgment when every feature was finally before me. They were amused with the barber's conceit about the English language, which, I understood, is by no means a singular view of the subject."

At the close of his journal, Mr. Cobbett allows his abuse to flow upon Mr. James Perry, who had ventured to dispute the knowledge of Cobbett in his construction of the English verbs. Speaking of the middle of April, he says, "The grass begins to afford a good deal for sheep, and for my grazing English pigs, and the cows and oxen get a little food from it. The pears, apples, and other fruit trees have not made much progress in the swelling or bursting of their buds. The buds of the weeping willow have *burst*ed (for in spite of that conceited ass, Mr. James Perry *to burst* is a *regular verb*, and vulgar pedants only make it irregular) and those of a lilac in a warm place are 'almost *burst*ed,' which is a great deal better than to say 'almost *burst*.' Oh! the coxcomb! as if an absolute pedagogue like him could injure me by his criticisms, and, as if an error like this, even if it had been one could have any thing to do with my capacity for developping principles and for simplifying things, which in their nature are of very great complexity.*

From the following singular and concise statement, the

* Cobbett is in general very unfortunate when he enters upon the discussion of the correct construction of the English language, and more especially so as from his pretensions, a positive degree of accuracy ought to be expected. The verb, *to burst*, whether taken in its active or neuter sense, is decidedly an irregular verb. There is no such participle to the verb as *burst*ed, and Cobbett should have given us his authority for making *burst* a regular verb, before he stigmatizes those as vulgar pedants and literary coxcombs, who adhere to the generally received opinion of its being an irregular one. The preterite and the participle of the verb, are both *burst*, and we might have defied Cobbett to produce a classical writer who makes use of the participle *burst*ed. The Saxon participle *bursten* was formerly used, but is now obsolete.

mode of life which Cobbett led in Long Island may be distinctly ascertained, at the same time, that now and then the character of the man displays itself, in those strong and never-fading colours, which stamp it as one of the most extraordinary of the age.

"In the gardens in general (April 25th) there is nothing green, while in England they have broccoli to eat; early cabbages planted out, coleworts to eat, peas four or five inches high. Yet we shall have green peas and loaved cabbages as soon as they will. We have sprouts from the cabbage stems preserved under cover; the *Swedish turnip* is giving me greens from bulbs planted out in March, how I got these Swedish turnips, you shall know. And I have some broccoli too, just coming on for use. *How* I got this broccoli, I must explain in my Gardener's Guide, for write one I must. I never can leave this country without an attempt to make every farmer a gardener. In the meat way, we have beef, mutton, bacon, fowls, a calf to kill in a fortnight's time, sucking pigs when we choose, lamb nearly fit to kill, and all of our own breeding or our own feeding. We kill an ox, send three quarters and the hide to market, and keep one quarter. Then a sheep, which we use in the same way. The bacon is always ready. Some fowls always fatting. Young ducks are just coming out *to meet the green peas*. Chickens, as big as American partridges (misnamed quails,) and *ready for the asparagus*, which is just coming out of the ground, eggs at all times more than we can consume. And if there be any one, who wants better fare than this, let the grumbling glutton come to that poverty, which Solomon has said shall be his lot.

On referring to Cobbett's Gardener, we find that he forgot to fulfil his promise of telling us how he came by his broccoli seed, but on referring to one of his Registers, we find the history of his Swedish turnip seed, of which, as he takes to himself the merit of being the introducer of that valuable esculent into America, we will insert his account, premising at

the same time that it furnishes us with some links in the chain of his history, which could not be found elsewhere. The following account is in a letter addressed to Samuel Clarke, Esq. on Scotch Impudence and English Sheepishness. Cobbett at the outset candidly acknowledges that the cultivation of the Swedish turnip, has nothing to do with Scotch impudence or English sheepishness, yet it is his whim to write upon both in the same Register.

"I came," says Cobbett, "to London late in November (1816) to carry on the war against corruption, owing to the falseness and cowardice of the shuffling chief (Sir Francis Burdett) under whose banners, I had, like an *unassuming fool* as I was, condescended to range myself; we were defeated, and some of us compelled to flee. I had then *fifty two acres* of transplanted Swedish turnips, containing upon an average not less than twenty tons to the acre, but they brought little or nothing. They were sold, I believe, to be what they call *fed off* by sheep, in short an almost total destruction of this beautiful crop took place. I knew this. *It was full in my mind when I was preparing to go off, in order to make corruption feel the force of my long arm.* I knew I was leaving my fine crop of turnips to be wasted and destroyed, but though *I had to move, merely with a trunk, and as quick as a post chaise would carry me,** though I left books, papers, and even the great part of my shirts and coats behind, I found time to get, and room to contain, *ten pounds of Swedish turnip seed! Nothing put this out of my head, no bills and no dungeons frightened this away.*

The foregoing account of the turnip seed is in full keeping with the real character of Cobbett. Whatever colouring he may think proper to throw over those events, which led to his sudden flight to America, there is no doubt whatever,

* Could all this extraordinary expedition have been necessary, merely because the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act had taken place, and at the same time that Cobbett had not yet brought himself within the penalties of the Six Acts Bill! Truth will in the end force its way, although every attempt be made to prevent it.

that it was occasioned by the threats of an immediate visit from Messrs. John Doe and Richard Roe, unless he liquidated certain demands against him, and he wisely preferred liberty and a farm in America, to imprisonment without a farm in England. He informs us that his departure from home was so sudden, that he had not time even to take his shirts and coats with him.—But then the ten pounds of turnip seed! Nothing could put that out of his head—No bills nor dungeons could frighten them out of his mind—The turnip seed was all uppermost! He had, perhaps, the example of Goldsmith before him, who, when his house was beset with bailiffs and his escape was planned by one of his friends, coolly asked him to stop a moment, whilst he went into his bedroom for his clothes' brush. "That ten pounds of turnip seed," continues Cobbett, "I sent for from Mason in the Strand, and had I not just thought of that ten pounds of turnip seed, America would, perhaps, to this day have been without that valuable vegetable, and I never reflect on this ten pounds of turnip seed, *without feeling more satisfaction, than I have derived from almost any thing during the whole course of my life.* The thought which led to the getting of this little bag of seed, finally produced the book which has been of such great utility to England, and of the merits of which I have received such flattering testimonials.* A very few days before my departure for England, a gentleman came to me a great distance out of the State of Connecticut, that is, above eighty miles, *for no other purpose* than to bestow his thanks upon me for the introduction of the Swedish turnip, thinking that a letter was not upon such *an important occasion*, a mode of acknowledgement, *such as my claims upon his gratitude demanded.* As to letters of thanks, they would have amounted to volumes, and indeed I was at last sorry to receive them, because it was wholly out of my power to answer them, and this I was

* This alludes to "AN ACCOUNT OF THE CULTURE, MODE OF PRESERVING, AND USES OF THE RUTA BAGA, sometimes called the SWEDISH TURNIP." Published with the "JOURNAL OF A YEAR'S RESIDENCE."

obliged to state in the public newspapers. The Americans, let them be of what party they would, were always *forward*, not only to acknowledge, but to proclaim the benefits they derived from my ten pounds of turnip seed, but then they were not borne down by corruption; they did not live in fear of her fangs; they were, in short, freemen, as their and our forefathers were. They were under no apprehension of being turned out of house and home; of being harrassed by the agents of any tyranny, of being marked out for ruin for doing justice to their instructor."

The great benefits derived by America from the ten pounds of turnip seed furnishes Cobbett with an opportunity of comparing the strength of the Yankee labourers with those of England, and also of noticing some most extraordinary feats performed by the said Yankees in the tilling of their land, and the construction of their roads and bridges. Truly may Cobbett say, *there is no doing justice to America, without going to see it*, and certainly to the curious, could they see, what Cobbett saw, a trip thither would amply repay a month's sea sickness, or a reduced allowance of a biscuit and a glass of water per day. Some parts of the following are, indeed, by no means complimentary to the race of men, who at present inhabit England, but Cobbett was perhaps of the opinion of the late Lord Monboddoo, that the human race have so degenerated, and are still so degenerating, that eventually there will be none but pigmies on the earth.

Speaking of the strength of an American labourer who can mow from three to four acres of grass in a day, carrying a *swarth full eight feet wide!* Cobbett says, "Strange thing! that those giants should have sprung from Englishmen! But the truth is, *the bodies and limbs of the English have grown smaller than they were forty years ago*. Why not? do we not see all animals fall off, if kept badly, and especially if worked hard too. To have the horse fine, must we not feed the dam and the colt well? There is then no mystery in the fact, that *four* Yankee mowers will weigh down *eight* English ones! However *there is no doing justice to Ame-*

rica without going to see it ! If, you could see their mile long bridges, without a single pier, wagons going over, and vessels sailing under !! If, you could see them with forty oxen to a p'ough, forming a new turnpike road, just as you would form a ten furrow ridge in one of your fields. If, you could see them with a team of twenty or thirty oxen, and only one man, with what they call a scraper filling in the roots, and smoothing and rounding a turnpike road at the rate of three miles an hour to each side, and doing about fifteen miles in a day ! with what shame you would think of the toddlers, the poultry in human shape, that you had left behind, pecking in the ruts in England. You are clever fellows in Norfolk. You have things in great perfection, but it would be worth while for you to send an embassy to Connecticut to fetch over a Yankee ploughman, his pair of oxen, his yoke, his chain and his plough : He needs no driver, no reins, no whip. Haw and gee, ghup and whoa, these with the different modulations of the voice, do the whole thing. I wish to God, you could see a Yankee 'Baw' going out to the pasture at sunrise, bare-footed and bare-legged, with no clothing but trousers and shirt and a straw hat, with his yoke upon his shoulder, and could hear him calling his oxen by their names, and could see the gentle animals so obedient to his call, and in such haste to get to him, if he call in a tone of impatience. Taking the whole of the proceedings of the day together ; the part acted by man and oxen ; the manners of both, the little noise that they make, the quantity and quality of their labour, the simplicity and trifling cost of the implements ; the circumstances, that it is the ploughman himself who repairs and frequently makes these implements ; taking the whole together, the Yankee ploughman's day is the most interesting thing that the interesting affairs of husbandry present. If you could see a Yankee ploughman at work, you would never rest till you had ridden your farnp of horses."

In the course of Cobbett's short residence in America, the idea had entered his mind, that the cultivation of the locust tree, and of Indian corn was practicable in this country ; on

which subject, the following will be read, not only with great interest, but amusement also, as being no weak specimen of the hard blows which Cobbett was in the habit of dealing out to his opponents.

“Curious,” says he, “that while our snorting, groping, grasping, conceited, jackass-like managers of our ‘Royal Woods and Forests,’ never have been able to perceive that it was their duty to pay attention to what I said about locust trees: curious, that while I have actually caused a million or more of these trees to be planted in England, and in going through that country, see beautiful plantations of them; curious, that while my book, called *The Woodlands*, would have taught these nasty, snorting creatures how to furnish the English navy with pins, or trunnels, as they are vulgarly called, long and long ago, and a thousand times as good as the best oak that they can find; curious that, while those nasty, snorting things have been totally disregarding this very important matter, the Americans themselves should have their attention stirred up by my exertions in England. There requires, however, an observation or two on the subject. The reader will wonder at the necessity of encouraging people to plant this tree in a country, which he will think full of them. In the first place, it is a rare tree all along the sea coast of America, and when you get as far south as Maryland, it will not grow near the sea at all. You must go back nearly a hundred miles before the trees grow freely and finely, and even there, they do not grow so finely as in England. The reader will see mention of a worm that is injurious to this tree. There is such a worm in America. It gets into the joints of the shoots, and they canker and die. There is no such worm in England, and in every respect the tree is finer here than in America; yet our snorting government, who understands ‘*heddekashun*’ so well, who has found out the art of making an Englishman live upon fifteen ounces of mutton a week, weighed before cooking, and including bone; who understands how to lay out in time of peace, thirty eight thousand pounds a year in secret service money; who

beats all the turnkeys upon earth in its knowledge of 'prison discipline,' who well understands the art of making farmers and labourers drink at the ditch, instead of turning their own hops and barley into beer, and yet, I say, in spite of these facts from America, in spite of the proofs that this most essential timber of all might be supplied to our navy, from our own public forests, in spite of all this, this snorting government, sleepy-eyed, and ever grasping at the same time, cannot take even the slightest precaution necessary to this great end. But in this, as in every thing else of its acts and its manners, we see proofs of a downward march; we see proofs that it is destined to come down. The miserable wretches, who have the management of its affairs, are in the first place, destitute of all knowledge, that can be of any use in the sustaining of a state. They have been twenty years at peace, and they now tremble at the bare thought of war. They have expended during this peace three hundred millions of pounds sterling on a navy and an army; they have four hundred and fifty generals, and two hundred and fifty admirals, and yet they tremble at the thoughts of a war, and tremble they well may, for unless there be a total change in the system of taxing the people, and carrying on the government in England, driven off the face of the ocean to a certainty they will be, by the United States alone, if they dare to utter towards that famous republic one of those insolent expressions, with which it was so long their fashion to treat the different nations of the world."

For several months, Cobbett continued to live at his *farm*, called Hyde Park, on Hampstead Plains, Long Island, from which he shot forth his fulminating bolts against the advocates of corruption; himself, as he expresses it, safe from their gags, their prisons, and their lawyers. On the 20th of May, however, a circumstance occurred, which threatened to break even his giant mind, and render him unfit for those mental labours, to which it was his custom to devote himself. A fire broke out in his mansion house, and the whole building was burnt to the ground, thus rendering him houseless, and

almost broken in spirits, in a land far distant from that of his birth, and to which his thoughts had ever been turned during this period of his self-banishment, with the feelings of a child, who has been forced from the parents, whom he has revered and almost worshipped. To poor Cobbett, this was a bitter trial indeed. He had lived in some degree to triumph over the most inveterate malice of his enemies. He had seen them quail at the thunder of his voice, when he raised it to denounce bad men and their evil actions. He had, it is true, been made to suffer heavily, both in purse and in person, for the boldness of these attacks, yet still his courage forsook him not, even in the hour of his deepest affliction. The present calamity, however, seems to have occasioned him more grief, than had ever before fallen to his share. In a few hours he had seen his comfortable home reduced by the flames to a heap of ashes. The picture of happiness that had been lately presented to his view, had suddenly vanished. His home was destroyed, and with it a great part of the farming stock, corn, hay, &c. were reduced to a heap of mouldering ashes. Cobbett looked around him, and his heart was chilled at the black scene of desolation that presented itself. America had lost the charm that once captivated him; his home was gone, and his thoughts recurring once more to England, he immediately began to entertain serious thoughts of returning to the land of his birth, which he still ardently loved, in spite of the fierce persecution, that had ever followed him there.

In forming this resolution, a thousand lurking dangers that might there await him arose in his mind. He knew full well the powerful enemies he would have to cope with in this country, and the extent to which their vindictive feelings would probably lead them, but he also knew that since he had left England, a very great change had taken place. The reformers had every where mustered in great numbers, and confident in the justness of their demands, had assumed an appearance of boldness that had terrified the members of the government, and more than half insured their own ultimate success. In all the northern provinces of England, these pa-

tricts had exhibited themselves in great strength, and though the ministers had succeeded in arresting and punishing some of the boldest amongst the advocates of reform, it was now become apparent to all, even to those who had been the most adverse to it, that the day was not far distant, when some measure must be introduced to satisfy the loud and incessant demands that were being made for a more just and equitable representation of parliament. With this cheering prospect before him, Cobbett at once resolved to return to England, where he hoped his own presence and influence might hasten a communication most devoutly to be wished.

Previously, however, to Cobbett putting his plan into execution, Messrs. Johnson Baguley, and Drummond, were brought to trial, and Cobbett no sooner heard of the severe sentence passed upon them, somewhat similar to his own, of two years imprisonment, than he ended the following letter to them, which will be read with extraordinary interest, not only on account of the insight which it gives us into Cobbett's character, but of the value of the advice which is contained in it to all those who may be similarly circumstanced.

"To Messrs. JOHNSON, BAGULEY, and DRUMMOND.—On their imprisonment, and on the line of conduct which they ought to pursue; and on Political Shoy-hoys.

"North Hampstead, Long Island,
30th June, 1819.

"GENTLEMEN,

"The news of the proceedings against you have reached me. They do not at all surprise me; for such things have taken place, in all ages and in all countries, during the struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors. Men should never despair of the Commonwealth; for, even in the hardest of their sufferings, there is a source of consolation; seeing that, in the end, those sufferings are always visited upon the heads of the oppressors. If you look back into history, you will find, that tyrants have, for the most part, been brought to punishment by the immediate exertions of those, who have

smarted under their tyranny. Be of good cheer, therefore. You are *young men*. The present active tyrants will, according to the course of nature, quit the world before you. But, the chances are, that, if you be prudent, and especially sober, you will see the effect of complete justice on their heads.

"They sentenced me, or rather, caused *me* to be sent to prison for the same length of time, that they have caused you to be sent to prison. At that time all was a *deep gloom*. The public mind was in darkness.

"One half of even good men thought my horrid punishment *necessary*, if not *just*. Then my punishment was, with many, a subject of jesting. There was one villain, whose name was Gillray, and who was pensioned by the borough-mongers, who *caricatured* me looking through my prison walls. Some villains of farmers, then *fat*, riding by one of my fields, where my men were putting up a fence, cried out, '*where be the iron bars?*' This scoundrel race has been well pinched since, and Gillray, before I had been in prison eight months, *died raving mad!*

"At that time delusion was at its height. The war was profitable to many persons. The base paper-money served its end: that is to give a florid appearance to trade and agriculture. The nation was mad with what it deemed prosperity. The commerce of all nations was laid under contribution by the boroughmongers. There never was so gloomy a period for the friends of law and justice.

"But I did not *despair*. On the contrary, I never had hopes more lively or thoughts more gay. The *time*, which the tyrants had given; the '*abstraction from Society*,' as the old hard-hearted ruffian in the *den* called it, or, rather, the abstraction from rural affairs, in which the barbarous villains had placed me, enabled me to reflect on, and to examine into the real state of their affairs. That reflection and that examination led to the series of papers entitled, *Paper against Gold*, which has contributed more than any other effort towards the danger, which the tyrants now experience.

We must be *patient*. We must 'cast our bread on the

waters.' The efforts which destroy tyrannies are, generally, those which have not an immediate effect, visible to all eyes. Sap and mine are better than assault, where the fortress is strong. I was convinced that the nation's best hope was the *insolvency* of the borough tyrants, money being the all-in-all with a system of corruption. I had long been of opinion that the bank-notes could *never be paid in specie*, and, in Paper against Gold, I *proved* that this was the case. That is to say, they never could be paid in specie, without a total breaking up of the whole system of corruption and tyranny. If corruption attempted to pay, she could not raise the taxes necessary to pay the interest of her debt. She could not attempt to pay without putting a stop to all the labours which sustained her, and gave her the means of tyrannising and of making war against freedom. Yet, if she could never pay, without blowing up herself at once, it was clear, that, sooner or later, she must be overwhelmed by her own base paper.

"Therefore, I, within my prison walls, bent all my force to *prove*, that she could never pay without blowing herself up by the act of paying. This was a heavy blow to her; for, though the nation took little notice, at the time, of what I said, events went on, as I knew they would, to confirm all my doctrines and predictions.

"At the time I was sent to what corruption thought to be *death*, or *total ruin*, the Westminster wiseacres had before them what they called a *Report* from a Committee, which in their gibberish, was called the *Bullion Committee*. This had been produced by a motion of the *out-faction*, who pretended to want to make the Bank pay in specie at the end of *two years*, from 1811. This faction proposed the passing of a law to *compel* the Bank to pay at the end of two years. The *in-faction* resisted this, and said, that, though the Bank had ample means, it would be unwise to suffer it to pay, as long as 'the tyrant of Europe had power to disturb all the relationships of commerce.' When peace came, they said, all would put itself to rights again. Then the gold would return as a *matter of course*.

"I exposed the folly of this expectation. I had proved that it was impossible that the expectation could be realized. I was treated by many as a dreamer. I was, however, convinced that time would confirm all that I had said; and in that conviction, I enjoyed myself exceedingly. I never enjoyed better health, better spirits, or greater pleasure, than in that prison, in which the borough tyrants expected me to go mad, pine myself to death, die of contagion, or cut my throat. I had the pleasure to reflect, that I was striking my bloody ferocious tyrants in their tender part. Call this *revengeful*, if they choose. A pretty doctrine, indeed, is this doctrine of *forgiveness*. It is cooked up for our use; for the tyrants never use it. Their forgiveness is only a mitigated vengeance. They rob us, and, if we so much as murmur, they scourge us. They compel us to come forth and bear arms in defence of what they call the country; they flog, us if we be guilty of a breach of military discipline; they take from us more than the half of our earnings; they deny us any right to choose those who make the laws; and if we complain, they shut us up in dungeons and keep us there as long as they please, in despite of all the laws of the land. This is the manner in which you were treated. Being again at liberty, you publicly threatened vengeance. This was your crime; and now by the decision of a *Special Jury*, you are to endure two years more of imprisonment. And this, even this, you are to *forgive*! Blistered be the tongue that counsels you to such a course! You are young men, and if you be prudent, vengeance you will have; and as to what will be prudence on your part, I now take the liberty to offer you my opinion.

"Coolness, patience, sobriety; above all things sobriety. These are necessary even to your health. No man living is more impatient than I, under the suffering of wrong, intentionally done me. The wrong which I felt, when sent to Newgate, was great, very great in itself; but besides this, it was accompanied with so many provoking circumstances, that perhaps, no wrong was ever calculated to produce so deep and lasting an impression. I did not *swear* vengeance; I made

no vows. To be revenged on the barbarous, base, cowardly, hypocritical ruffians, became instantly an object with me that swallowed up all others. And was not this *right*? What would there be to check powerful tyrants, if their victims were to suffer contentedly? Was it not the just vengeance of the oppressed, that drove the tyrannical nobles and bloody clergy from France? What but just vengeance was it, that drove James the second from England? And, observe, too, that, in this case, the sins of the father were visited upon the children from generation to generation. Why then, are we not to think of revenge?

“But though to seek vengeance became the main object of my life, I did not fly out into vain threats and clamorous curses. I kept myself cool; I calculated patiently upon a ten or twenty years’ war against the ruffians. That melancholy fellow, Doctor Johnson, observes, that when a man plants a tree, he begins to think of dying. If this were the fact, is that to prevent the planting of trees? I have been planting of trees in every spot that I have occupied, all my life time; and I am now collecting *seeds* of trees to carry home, and to sow in England next spring. I expect to sit under the shade of the trees, which these seeds will produce; and, if I only see them six inches high, have I not the enjoyment of so much of them? So, in seeking justice of our oppressors, if we die before we have obtained that justice, we enjoy, in the meanwhile, the blows we inflict on them. We enjoy their fears, their embarrassments, their disgrace, their infamy. The ruffian band are now writhing under my blows, given a few months after I was in my prison. I have been dealing them blows from that day to this. All my plans in private life; all my pursuits; all my designs, wishes, and thoughts, have this one great object in view: *the overthrow of the ruffian Boroughmongers*. If I write grammars; if I write on agriculture; if I sow, plant, or deal in seeds; whatever I do, has *first* in view the destruction of those infamous tyrants.

“But as I said before, I keep in good humour. I keep steadily on. If events move slower than I could wish. I

labour more sedulously to accelerate their pace. This is what I advise you to do. *Sobriety* is the first thing; for without that, there is no healthy body and no sound mind. In the midst of a society, where wine and spirits are considered of little more value than water, I have lived two years without either, and with no other drink but water, except when I have found it convenient to obtain milk; not the smallest ailment; not a restless night; not a drowsy morning, have I known during these two famous years of my life. The *sun never rises before me*. I have always to wait for him to come and give me light to write by, while my mind is in full vigour and while nothing has come to cloud its clearness. At this very moment that I am writing to you, it is not eight o'clock, and I have written thus far before my breakfast, having employed, too, a quarter of an hour in giving directions to my men.

“All the plans for husbanding our *time*, are folly, without *sobriety*. Without sobriety we cannot be *industrious*; and, without industry we are no terror to our tyrants. You see what embarrassment the villains are now in. You see how they are puzzled to invent new lies, in order to hide the fact of their irrevocable insolvency. They are at their *wit's end*. And, a satisfaction it is to me to reflect, that it is I, who have more than all other men put together, brought them into this state! Very few days of my life have been unhappy; but, if I were not to be happy now, how could I ever be happy? All this I owe to my sobriety; and, therefore, let me exhort you to be sober. You are so, I hope; but I am sure you will excuse me for pressing on you the necessity of sobriety.

“A jail is as good a place for *study* as any other. To study, a man must be *confined* in some place. It matters little where we are, if we have health and leisure. It is in this case the mind that works, and not the body. Now is the time for you to become *grammarians*. In your place I should reason thus: ‘How shall I be able most effectually to annoy the tyrants? By my pen, combined with my other means. How shall I qualify myself to use my pen with

effect? By knowing how to write correctly. How shall I get that knowledge? By learning grammar. Therefore I will learn grammar.'

Do this, and you will, at the end of the two years, be a great deal more formidable to the ruffians than you were when they seized hold of you. Besides, you will find in this study, a source of continual amusement and encouragement. At every stage of your progress, you will feel yourself more a match for your oppressors; and, long before the close of your studies, you will *despise* the ruffians even more than you hate them. You have *long lives* yet to live. You are placed *aloft* by your sufferings. You start from the most favourable point. And you may, if you will, become men, famous in the annals of England. But, without *literary talent*, you will be able to do little. Mr. Johnson's *pistol* was a good thing; but a pen is a great deal better; and the pen you cannot use *with effect*, without *acquired* knowledge.

"To repine, to revile, to *stern*, are of no real use. Sailors, in a gale, do not curse the winds and the waves. They mount the yards, reef the sails, lower the masts, and patiently wait the moment when they dare rehoist and unfurl. This must be your way of proceeding, if you mean to arrive safe at the end of your voyage. To execrate the tyrants is right and fitting; but without exertion against them, execration is folly in the extreme. Say little, think much, and be constantly at work, cultivating your minds, that you may be able to inflict vengeance on the oppressors of your country.

"I, who am old enough, probably, to be the father of you, never despair. Nothing that does not tie my hands, or take my health from me, can make me slacken my efforts in the war against our villains. The difficulties that I have had to struggle with, in order to carry on this war, are not to be described. But, they have never disheartened me for one single moment. I have often been in a state to make it a question with me, whether or not it was probable that I should end my days in the capacity of a gardener, or a common labourer; for, under such an infernal system, no man can

count upon any thing as a provision for age or sickness. But, never did it occur to me to desist from the strife, in order to insure even bread to eat. My hatred of the borough villains, and my anxious desire to assist in the infliction of vengeance on them, have made me more and more rigid as to sobriety and abstemiousness. At every stage of their oppressions, I have become more and more careful to avoid any thing that might tend to narrow my sphere of exertion. Before they imprisoned me, I was now and then tempted to drink wine and spirits and water. I, after the imprisonment, sometimes drank ale and porter. But, since their *dungeon Bill*, milk and water, or water alone, has been my drink. When I rise in the morning, while others lie snoring; when I perceive how much younger I look, how much stronger I am and how much nimbler I move, than men in general who are younger than I; when I think of my ability to encounter labour in the fields, and of the sound sleep which I enjoy on a bed and pillow of straw; when I see others, and young men too, detained at home by foul weather, or muffled up in order to venture out in it, while I care for neither heat, wet, nor cold; when under any of these circumstances, I always bear in mind, that this happy habit, this iron constitution have been, in a great measure, the effects of my anxious desire to inflict vengeance on our country's foes. I have lately met with an accident *from fire*. The house in which I lived was burnt down. This threw me out for a month. I should have gone to New York, and remained there till the time of my departure for England; but, when I considered the interruptions which such a removal would occasion, and when I thought of the injury that these and the air of a city might be to my literary labours, I resolved on making a sort of *thatched tent*, in which I might enjoy tranquillity, and in which I might labour without intermission. In this tent, made of poles, thatch, and *English newspapers*, I have now the honour to address you. Happiness never depends upon mere place. It depends little more on food or raiment. My diet all comes from my own fields, and my cow is my vintner

and brewer. I am asleep on my straw by nine o'clock, and I am in my orchard before four o'clock. Yet, who can be happier? My mind is, for the far greater part of my time, in England. And I have the infinite satisfaction to see, that I have from this distance, stricken blows which have made the tyrants half distracted.

"A young man, from England, who came, a few days ago, to ask my advice, and who had just arrived from England, exclaimed, upon seeing my gipsy-like habitation, 'Only think of papers being written in *this* place, and at such a distance, to produce so much effect upon the English nation!' 'Oh!' said I, 'England is just on the other side of that plain there. A ship is always ready to carry the papers. And as to this tent, it is not the tent, but my head, which produces the papers, which you have been so kind and partial as to admire.' I showed him the fine umbrageous walnut tree, under which I wrote the letter, last summer, to the old battered hack, Tierney. I gave him some bacon and cabbage, and dumplings; and we toasted the debt, in milk and water.

"Now, it appears to me, that you are nearly as well situated as I am for mental exertion. You cannot go out of your prison, and I never want to stir from my tent. Resolve to study; resolve to become able to obtain revenge; and revenge you will obtain.

"The situation of our tyrants is now such as no one, not at the gallows, ought to envy. In spite of all the falsehoods, which their prime tools put forth, the distresses of their slaves go on regularly increasing. You are deceived, if you suppose that I want proofs of this. These proofs are the daily arrival of farmers and labourers from England. Within the last twelve months, upwards of a hundred and fifty thousand have landed from England to settle here. My family consists of an English woman, an English girl, an English boy, and three young Englishmen. They are all excellent servants. The men receive twelve dollars a month, with board, lodgings, and washing found them. The same men could not obtain, in England, four dollars a month. And, as to

living, my men have bacon, the best in this world; best wheaten bread; a fat sheep or lamb once a week, flinging the head and pluck to the dogs; good puddings and pies, fruit and other; a cherry orchard to go and eat what cherries they please; and to drink, they have about four gallons of milk a day. Each of these young men has a good bag of dollars. The first of these men is Thomas Knight, from Charlton in Hampshire; the second is Richard Haines, from Shalford, in Berkshire; the third is Charles Cobbett, from Rumsey, in Hampshire. Here they are, engaged in the work of cultivating things, hardly ever cultivated in this island before. Here they are, teaching the people some things, at least, that they did not know before. Here they are, most admirable workmen, exerting all their skill and strength for the benefit of a foreign nation. Thousands upon thousands of such men are daily coming. And come they will, until the tyranny be abated. So that, if we could suppose it possible for the barbarous system to last another ten years, the borough villains would be left with nobody but the very paupers. There has recently arrived a man from Kent, with his wife and family, to whom *the parish gave twenty pounds to bring him out!* The scheme was wise for both parties; but only think of the infernal system that could *make it wise!* Future ages will read of the borough villains, as of monsters unparalleled. It will be a subject of wonder how such monsters came to be suffered to live."

Cobbett had no sooner formed the resolution of returning to England, than the most extraordinary crotchet entered his brain, of exhuming the bones of Thomas Paine, and conveying them to England, for the purpose of laying them in the land of his nativity. This extraordinary change in the opinions of Cobbett of a man, whom he had denounced as a rebel, a wretch, a ragamuffin, and in fact on whom he had emptied his whole stock of vituperative epithets, more copious, perhaps, than ever belonged to any other man, naturally exposed him to the well-founded charge of inconsistency, and tergiversation. We have only to turn our attention to Cob-

bett's remarks on Paine's Age of Reason to exhibit the astonishing difference which had taken place in the mind of Cobbett, during his first residence in America, and during his latter sojourn there, touching the character of Paine, to whose remains he now paid as much homage as ever was paid by pious Catholics to the relics of departed saints. We shall take the few following extracts as they rise, being a good sample of the remainder of the work, and which are significantly called the " Beauties of Cobbett."

" The WRETCH Paine has all his life been employed in leading fools astray from their duty, and as nothing is more easy, he has often succeeded. His religion is exactly of a piece with his politics ; one inculcates the right of revolting against government, and the other of revolting against God. How Tom came to think of exercising his *clumsy, battered* pen upon the christian religion, is what has excited a good deal of curiosity, without ever being well accounted for in this country ; notwithstanding, *the circumstances under which a man writes ought to be attended to, in forming a judgment of his opinions*, particularly, if those opinions be new and extraordinary. For this reason I shall endeavour to trace this RAGAMUFFIN DEIST from America to his Paris dungeon, and to account for his having laid down the dagger of insurrection, in order to take up the chalice of irreligion.

* * * * *

" Thomas, after having retailed out a good deal of *Common Sense*, commonly called *nonsense*, found himself rather richer than when he began. This gave him a smack for revolutions, but finding himself sinking fast into his native mud, and *universally despised, and neglected by the people of this country*, in short, that the Americans were returning to order, and feeling that his element was confusion, he crossed the Atlantic to bask in the rays of the French revolution. Off goes Tom with his Rights of Man, which he had the abominable impudence to dedicate to General Washington. The English jacobins stared at him at first ; he went a step further than they had ever dreamed of ; his doctrines, however, grew

familiar to their ears; they took him under their wing, and he made sure of another revolution. This security was his misfortune, and had nearly cost him a voyage to the South Seas.

* * * * *

“From the *thiefcatchers* in England, Tom fled, and took his seat among the thieves of Paris. After having distinguished himself in execrating the constitution he had written in defence of, he and two or three others set to work, and made a new one, quite brand new, without a single ounce of old stuff. This crowned Tom with glory soon after, when it was unanimously accepted by the rich, free, generous, and humane French nation. This may be looked upon as the happiest period of Tom’s life. He had enjoyed partial revolts, *had seen doors and windows broken in, and had probably partaken of the pillage of some aristocratical stores*, and dwelling houses, but to live in a continual state of insurrection, ‘sacred, holy, organised insurrection,’ to sit seven days in the week issuing decrees for plunder, proscription, and massacre, was a luxurious life indeed. It was, however, a short life and a merry one; it lasted but five months. The tender-hearted, philanthropic murderer, Brissot, and his faction, fell from the pinnacle of their glory, poor Tom’s wares got out of vogue, and his carcass got into a dungeon. ‘*Et cetera desunt.*’”

We will now give, by way of contrast, the opinion of Cobbett touching “this wretch,” “this ragamuffin,” “this fiend,” as it was openly avowed by him in the defence that he made to an attack which was levelled at him by a merchant of Liverpool, of the name of Cropper, and on whom Cobbett had dealt some harsh blows relative to the part which Mr. Cropper was supposed to take in the slave trade.

In one of Mr. Cropper’s Letters, which he wrote under the signature of Veritas, he says, speaking of Cobbett, “You say, I do not feel it incumbent upon me to discuss the merits of Mr. Cropper’s reasoning, or to question his facts, for I believe both to be incontrovertible, and certainly they are

uncontroverted by you. My attention is to *connect malice with all your abuse*, and to prove that you have abandoned truth, and adopted your base passions as unerring guides in the pursuit of your revenge."

Thus retaliates Cobbett, "This is very bad, friend Cropper. This is very poor and mean. To look about after the *motives* of the writer, instead of boldly meeting the writing itself, was a very poor way of convincing people, that you felt strong in your cause. However as the fact comes out here so plainly that Veritas is James Cropper, as we get the old fox here fast by the brush, I will notice what you say about these motives, which you state in the following passage.

" 'A short time after you deserted your post, and *ran away* from this country to America, you set about *raking together the bones of Tom Paine*. Possessed of the relics of your newly-adopted saint, you determined on returning to England, and *either took or wished to take* your passage in one of the packet ships, which ply between New York and Liverpool. These ships are owned by Isaac Wright and Sons, who are 'of the people called Quakers.' These gentlemen, it seems, had heard of *your insolent and offensive conduct during your voyage to America on board the Importer*, and they determined *you should not have a passage in any ship of theirs*. To this determination I believe they were impelled by the passengers, who declared, that if you were suffered to go they would stay behind. This, sir, was an offence which you can never forgive, and here is the *animus* of your attack on Mr. Cropper. You know, sir, that it is unlawful for an Englishman to own part of an American vessel, yet you charge him with the crime of being a partner with Mr. Wright, and then proceed to wreak your malice on both.'

"Here is," says Cobbett, "more than one self-contradiction, besides all the falsehoods that are huddled together. We will pass over the desertion of the post, that desertion, which you well know did amongst a great many other things, produce Peel's Bill. I was in America two years and five months,

during the last of these five months Mr. Paine's remains, were disinterred, and even, I believe, after I had taken my passage of Isaac Wright. So much for your veracity on that point. But Wright and sons had heard of my insolent and offensive conduct during my voyage to America on board the Importer; and they (that is to say, in consequence of which) determined that I should not have a passage in any of their ships, and yet just before you had said, that I either took or wished to take my passage in one of their ships. Ah! you cunning old fox! You know well that I did take my passage, and that old Wright, for the base reasons by and by to be stated, broke his word and his contract. They had heard of my conduct on board of the Importer!! Why, that conduct was two years and five months old, and yet you are too cunning to say that I did not take my passage; that Wright did not agree with me for it, though you afterwards assert that they determined that I should not come in their ships in consequence of that conduct, and yet upon the heels of this comes that other lie of Wright, and this other self-contradiction of yours, that to this determination they were impelled by the passengers, who declared, if I were suffered to go, they would stay behind. So that here is Wright, determined that I should not go in consequence of my conduct in the Importer, and we have him impelled to that determination by the passengers, and keeping me back unfairly, in violation of his contract with me, if I had taken the place, and that to according to your own confession from the base motive of having two or three passengers instead of one.

“ Thus far on your own showing, and now for the facts of the case, all facts, either of public notoriety, or capable of proof upon oath.

“ As to ‘raking together the bones of Tom Paine,’ Mr. Paine *was the only man of distinguished talent ever produced amongst the society of Quakers*. He did not like the idea of having his bones dug up by prejudiced bigots, and treated in a beastly manner. His wish was, therefore, to be buried in the Quaker's burying ground at New York. His wish was

expressed, I believe, to Mr. Willet Hicks of that city, who is, I am told, at this moment in your house at Liverpool. And what was the reason on which the Quakers founded their objection? Why this, *that there were many who accused them of deism already*, and that if they buried him in their ground, the accusation would have a circumstance to rest on. The reason was very mean, to say the best of it, and all the Quakers that I have talked with on the subject in America, will, if they be not as tricky as you, acknowledge that I reproached them with their cowardice; with their want of all feeling of honour, with their casting from them the **ONLY GREAT MAN** that their sect ever produced.

“ Mr. Paine was buried in a corner of one of his fields. The land, which he had left by will, had just been sold, with a reservation of that spot, but the party who was to take care of that spot, was so sensible of the risk of a brutal disturbance of his ashes, that a negotiation was carried on with the churchwardens of one of the churches at New York, *for the removal of the remains into the churchyard*; but the utmost that could be obtained, was leave to put them in the ground, in a *refuse place*, where strangers, and soldiers, and other *friendless* persons were usually buried.

“ This was the state of the case in the month of October 1819. It was under *these circumstances* that I did that, which it was no more than a duty to have done under any circumstances, and while I am satisfied that I have the applause for this deed of all the just and generous amongst mankind, I shall console myself under the endurance of the malignant sneer, of a selfish, hardened, sly old Quaker, recollecting, too, that Paine *was a man of rare mental endowments; that he was the scourge of tyrants, under whatever name they disguised their tyranny, and that heaven is not farther from hell than he from being a spy, and meriting a death upon the gallows.*

“ So much for *bones*, then, friend Cropper, and now for the Importer and Isaac Wright.

“ As to the Importer, the Captain's name was Ogden.

There were two Yankees in the cabin, and two cubs from Manchester, besides me and my two sons. The Yankees, who had been at sea before, complained bitterly (*behind the captain's back*,) that they had not *fresh bread*, and assured us that they had it in the ship in which they came to Europe. As for me and my sons, always up early, never drinking but at meal times, and then only tea, or a very little porter, we cared very little about the matter, and heard these complaints for a long while without taking any part in the conversation. At last, after repeated requests on the part of these four passengers, and not then, till they were joined by a *very nice* modest woman from Manchester, who was in the cabin with her two small children and who wished very much for some fresh bread, I did not attempt to say a word about the matter. I then did, and merely requested the captain to let us have some *fresh bread*. The captain, who was one of those greedy fools, who have no idea of true economy, behaved upon this occasion like a little blackguard in authority, and he appealed to the other passengers, who were sitting round the table at the time, whether they had any fault to find, getting no answer, he put the question to them, one by one, in a most peremptory tone, and to my utter astonishment, all the four men or rather male animals, expressly said, that they were very well contented. 'There,' said he, 'turning to me, you see others are very well contented, but they are gentlemen, and know how to behave themselves,' whereupon I observed looking round at them; 'Certainly, those gentlemen are very well contented with your fare; those four gentlemen have no relish for fresh bread, or else they would be four of the basest cowards that ever poisoned a cabin with their stink.' A great deal more passed, in which the captain got nothing. After this, he adopted a rude behaviour, and used to call my son John by his plain christian name; played the Quaker in this case, though not in others. In his presence, therefore, I told John, who was then sixteen, that the captain should play the Quaker towards every body, or not towards him, for if he did, John had the liberty to chastise him upon the spot. This

nettled the blackguard and, especially when John replied
‘ Depend upon it, I will.’

“The hectoring fellow swelled and boiled, and looked red even through his tawny and thick skin, crammed a fist full of tobacco into his cheek, swallowed a glass of rum, and muttered out an abundance of broken curses. After a while, however, cowardice seems to have come to the relief of his swelling bosom. He said that he had meant no harm. If he had stopped there, all would have been well, but the evil genius of this man, was something like my friend Cropper’s, that is to say, being in a mess of mischief, he must needs keep on adding to the mass. He happened to fix his eye in that unfortunate moment upon one of the Yankees, who was the son of an opulent merchant and ship-owner of New York, and of course, an *employer of captains* having so fixed his eye, while his brain was fermented, and his tongue set in motion by the spirit, that is to say of the rum and tobacco, out came, while the fawning cur smiled upon the merchant’s son, these words, ‘I must confess that there are gentlemen on board my ship, that I respect more than I do you and your sons;’ ‘For which,’ said I, finishing the sentence for him, ‘we can the more easily console ourselves, seeing that I never believe you upon your word, and would not believe you upon your oath.’

“A sort of hubbub ensued, and a cry amongst the four gentlemen, that I could not mean what I said. The ship being in a brisk gale, the thing passed off till night, but then the sea being more calm, and the spirits of our four gentlemen having rallied, I heard them, while I was walking the deck, whispering that the captain ought not to put up with it. The captain, however, who knew more of his own merits than the Yankees or the cubs, did not seem very anxious to demand an explanation. The night was very fine, and I walked the deck till very late, going down into the cabin about midnight, I found the captain seated with the four gentlemen round him, my two sons being in bed and asleep. One of the cubs addressed me thus, ‘Sir, as I mean

to go *back* with the *copten*, I wish to know what it was you said to-day about the *copten's taking a false oath*.' I could easily see what the plan was ; and I deliberately and distinctly pronounced, with my finger within a foot of his nose, these words five times over, ' Captain Ogden, of the ship Importer, I do never believe you upon your word, and I would not believe you upon your oath ; and that you may possess evidence of this saying of mine, I will to-morrow, if you wish it, give you the words signed with my name !' In America, they have a phrase not common here, they call a passionate, violent, death-doing man an *ugly fellow*, and the captain, upon my sort of oratorical declaration, affected to be swoln with passion, and taking off his hat, flung it with great force upon the floor, said, '*You had better mind what you say, for if you put me up, you will find me a d—d ugly fellow*.' '*To put you up captain,*' said I, '*is by no means necessary to convince me of a fact, which my eyes conveyed to my mind the first moment that I saw you*.' This provoking coolness on my part, and this cruel assault upon the personal charms of as really an ugly a little dog as I ever saw, put 'the copten' of the Manchester cub into such a rage that he roused the whole ship with his stamping and swearing. However, he grew cool at last, and got quiet in the end, with as much ridicule as we found leisure to bestow on him and that was a great deal, during the remainder of the voyage.

"Now these are the facts, and in support of the truth of them, I have to state that which is notorious at New York, namely, that the cub's *copten*, though he had nearly fifty passengers on board, did not dare publish, as was the uniform practice in similar cases, a certificate or declaration on the part of those passengers, of his good treatment of them, such a paper was *drawn up*, it was signed by the two Yankees and the two cubs ; it was carried into the steerage, amongst the steerage passengers, just as we were coming off the port of New York. It was signed, I believe, by the greater part of them, but I declared my resolution, that if any such paper appeared in print, I would publish my account of the behaviour

of the cub's copten. No certificate ever appeared in print, and I appeal to every one, except sly old Quakers and their slaves, whether this be not proof sufficient of my having been in the right in this transaction.

"If any persons want to know what sort of an inmate I am on board a ship, let them ask Captain Cobb, of the ship *Hercules*, who is now with his ship at Liverpool, and with whom I came home. He will say, that he never had so little expensive and troublesome a passenger in all his numerous voyages. He will say, that he never heard me find fault, but with the *superabundance*, and really *waste* of his excellent provisions. He will say, that I know how to keep young men, strangers to me, from drinking even on board of ship, and that I know how to make a cabin cheerful, and to make the time seem short, and at the same time to banish cards and dice. He will say, that the ship having come to an anchor, and we having heard that the *Anne* of New York had been seized, on account of smuggled *Canton crapes*; he will say, that suspecting us to have some, he looked very hard at us and said, 'I hope that none of you would expose me to ruin.' He will say, that upon his barely uttering these words, I told the ship's steward (to whom I had given mine) to bring them out, to tie them up in a peice of canvass, to fasten a sounding plummet to them, and I then had them tost into the sea, though they had cost me several hundred dollars, and though I had taken great pains to select them as presents for my wife and daughters. Captain Cobb will further say, that he saw my conduct with surprise, and that he exclaimed, 'Never did I before see a man do a thing like that!!!' He expressed great sorrow for the disappointment of my wife and daughters, upon which, as he will remember, I said 'Oh! captain, don't make yourself uneasy about that; they will think these *Canton crapes* well disposed of, in relieving your mind, or they are *unworthy* of wearing *Canton crapes*!!'

"This detail, will, I dare say, be, by base and envious wretches, like Egerton Smith, called egotism, disgusting egotism, and it is disgusting to me to be compelled to enter

into such details. But what am I to do? Am I to be silent, while a swarm of corrupt miscreants are endeavouring to enfeeble the effect of my public labours, by calumniating my private character? If I were to notice a fiftieth part of these calumnies I should want room, though I filled my Register with nothing else. I mean the printed calumnies, for as to those which are uttered from the lips, a thousand volumes a year would not hold them. But I will just here give warning to a cub who is a member of a county, that if I hear any more of his base and cowardly backbitings, I will make him, before I have done with him, glad to seek refuge in that suffocation, for which a vat of drug juice, called London porter, will afford the appropriate and convenient means. Not in this case will it be ashes to ashes, but poison to poison. If such a stupid oaf be endured in silence, he surely ought to think himself too fortunate, and ought to take great care how he endeavours to blacken those who possess talent, and whose duty, strictly speaking, it is to expose and lash him."

A man, it is said, is seldom the judge of his own character, in this respect, however, Cobbett was an exception, and certainly whatever might be the opinion, which other persons might be disposed to form of him, no doubt can exist, that he stood very high in his own estimation, as the following will testify.

Having disposed of the CUB, the MEMBER OF A COUNTY, he thus proceeds, "If any one should be disposed to ask, 'How comes it, *that a man so directly the opposite of all that is selfish, ungenerous, and unfeeling; so kind, so indulgent, so tender towards all that come under his power, down to the lowest of animals; so forbearing as to lose thousands upon thousands, without ever having brought an action in the whole of his life; so completely destitute of insolent pride, so affable and obliging; in his very nature so happy, so good humoured, and gay.*' If any person should ask, how it comes to pass, that such a man should by so many of 'the race that write,' be held up as a hard, morose, violent, ill-tempered, unfeeling ruffian, let that person find the answer in the remark, which

I quote from memory, of the Dean of St. Patrick, 'The dunces are lenient enough towards each other, but if a man of real talent happen to make his appearance, they are all instantly up in arms, and as they cannot pull him down to their own level in any other way, they will endeavour to murder and blast his character.' "

Cobbett felt extremely indignant at the statement put forth by Cropper, under the name of Veritas, that the Wrights had refused him a passage to England on board one of their ships, especially as Cobbett takes to himself no little credit for having been the instrument, through the medium of his Register, of convincing the people of New York, and through them, the people of Liverpool, of the excellence of the line of packet system, which had been adopted between those two places ; little imagining at the same time, that for the high eulogiums which he had passed on the system, he was to be treated with ingratitude by the very owners of those vessels, and actually to be refused a passage in them. Cobbett thus enters upon his own defence, and his attack upon the Wrights, and roughly indeed did he handle them.

" You say that Wright and sons had taken their determination in consequence of my behaviour on board the Importer. Now this conduct must have been known by the partners and brothers of Isaac Wright, for it had taken place in May 1817, and it had even been the subject of publication (drawn forth by a lie in the London Courier,) so early as the fall of 1817. Now then, take these facts ; Jourdan Wright, a brother of Isaac, came to visit me with one of his sons, about the month of June, 1818, and to invite me to visit him, which I frequently afterwards did. Charles Wright, another brother of Isaac, met me at Jourdan Wright's, and very kindly invited me to his house, to which I went once or twice. Anthony Franklin, one of the partners, I believe, came and invited me to his house. James Bird, whose daughter has married a son of Jourdan Wright, did the same. I never, till I went to take my passage, personally knew Isaac or his sons, but if Isaac thought me a bad man, and not fit to go in

one of his ships, what the devil were all these relations about, who were really as good people as ever existed in the world, and as sensible as Isaac, at the least. Bear in mind, cunning old fox, that I did not scrape acquaintance with any of these gentlemen, for such they were in manners as well as in fortune and style of living; they came to invite me, and I should be a great hypocrite, if I denied that their behaviour towards me was always polite and kind. It was not I, however, who went to them first, or to any body else of an opulent character or appearance. I did, as I always do, scrape acquaintance enough, but it was always with the humbler farmers; mere wealth or fine clothes, never having been with me an object of respect, nor even of attention. What then, I repeat, were all these relations about, eating, drinking, talking, aye, and even langhing with William Cobbett, and ‘pleased to see him,’ if Isaac and his sons regarded him as unworthy to go in one of their packets? Moreover my intended return to England was always a subject of conversation amongst us, and long before the month of October came, they knew that I was to return in the ship *Amity*, which it was known of course would sail from New York on the tenth of that month.

“About a fortnight or three weeks before that day, I went to Isaac Wright at his own house, about three miles from New York, which happened to be close by the house where I then lived, and agreed with him for my passage, for which I was to pay forty guineas. I had never seen this Wright before, and I must say that I did not like his looks. He really looked what he proved to me. He was a sly-looking fellow, with a hard, slate-coloured countenance. However, he agreed with me for my passage. In some days after, I sent my son James to pay him the forty guineas, and was surprised to find that he refused to take the money, alleging that seven other passengers, who had also taken places, said they would not go in the ship, if I went. For a reason, presently to be mentioned, I was well convinced that this was a *lie*. I then wrote to the old blackguard, stating to him the injustice of

his proceeding; representing to him, that fully warranted by his *public advertisements of packets regularly plying between New York and Liverpool, for the accommodation of passengers*, I had long ago written home to my family, that I should sail in the *Amity* on the tenth of October. That to refuse me a passage was to violate faith with the public, as pledged in the standing advertisements; that it was in this case, to create disappointment and uneasiness in my family; that to do this act of injustice, to be guilty of this breach of agreement, on the alleged ground that he should lose money by letting me go, was something so very scandalous, that I hoped a little reflection would convince him, that in the end, it could not fail to expose him to just, severe, and general reproach, but that if after all, he was resolved to persevere, I requested him to furnish me with the names of those passengers, who had refused to sail with me, for unless he did that, my conclusions as to his conduct would be, if possible, still more unfavourable.

"This letter was taken to the *old vagabond* by my son James, who was then sixteen years of age. The *old rtp* took the letter into another room, to consult the devil, I suppose, how he should get out of the scrape, and in the meantime, the sneaking son of a hound said to James, in a sort of whining voice 'Why now friend Cobbett, thee canst not expect that father should give up *seven* for *one*.' To which James replied, 'I do not know what I am to expect from *your father*, but I know that my father would give up a million for one, rather than be guilty of so base an act, and that if any passengers were to propose such a thing to him, he would kick them out of the house.' The cub was as insensible to all feelings of honour as the old fox himself. I got no answer to my letter, other than a verbal message by James, that the old dog hoped I should not be offended, that *I could take a passage in some other ship*; that to tell me the names of the passengers could only lead to cause quarrels and strife, and that it was the duty of christians to promote peace and good will amongst men.

"I shall make no comment on this, otherwise than by re-

lating what passed between me and a very eminent lawyer, a countryman and a townsman of this shameless old reprobate Quaker. I said to him, 'Cannot you help me to torment this vile old dog?' His answer was 'What can you do with such a blackguard? As to shame he has none, and though a jury would certainly give you some of his money, the thing would not be worth the trouble. By the cant of his sect, he has the same protection, that we give to the most audacious, and profligate of women, but I think he should not escape chastisement altogether. If you horsewhip him yourself, they will hold you to bail for your appearance, and that is just what is wanted by him, and those, to gratify whose wishes, and his own interest, he acts. You may, if you like, let your son horsewhip him. I will engage he comes off with a fine of a quarter of a dollar.'

"I did not like to leave my son to do that, which I would not have done myself, and so the dirty old dog has escaped all punishment till now, and now friend Cropper, *you* it is that have drawn forth that, which he long ago merited. Not that this act of his did not excite general indignation, contempt, and reproach. The old vagabond made the apology about the seven passengers to Dr Taylor, who arrived in one of his ships before I came away, but Dr. Taylor told him to his face, that he knew of no breach of contract, and no act of fraud even, that might not be justified upon similar grounds. And to do the sect justice, *one Quaker*, and not a low one neither, who had heard the story, and who came to ask me about it, said 'That Wright was a d—d old rascal, and ought to be flung over the wall;' for Quakers will now and then *rap out*, and I have observed that those that do are by no means the least sincere.

"Thus stands friend Isaac, upon your own showing, but he is not yet exhibited in his true colours, as you will presently see. When I took my passage of him, the yellow fever was raging in New York, and he told me that he feared that he should not be able to obtain a letter of health from the English consul, Buchanan, by the tenth of October.

He said he had been to the consul, and was trying to get such letter, it being of vast importance to him, seeing that if the ship did not sail on that day, or if the ship were compelled to perform quarantine at Liverpool, there would be a gap in the line of packets, and that the whole of this great concern would be thrown into confusion. Now attend, reader, and mark the wonderously extensive workings of **THE THING** that famous **THING** that I have so often failed in my endeavours adequately to describe.

“Thus then, much depended upon *this consul*, who had been appointed by Castlereagh to the port of New York. Just at this precise time we had received news of the memorable Manchester affair, and of all the hubbub that was going on in England. If Isaac had *me* on board his ship, he imagined in the first place, that no point would *be stretched* in giving him his letter of health, and in the next place that his quarantine at Liverpool, if at last, he was compelled to sail without the letter of health, would not be shortened, on account of *my being on board the ship*. The result was, the yellow fever still raged on the 10th October, the letter of health could not be given without an open violation of the reports of the board of health, but though the ship was laden with things and with people coming from the very seat of deadly infection, she performed no quarantine at Liverpool, and lay in the quarantine ground only while one letter was passing to London and another coming back.”

That Cobbett was refused a passage in the *Amity* is a fact admitted even by himself; but the cause of that refusal has never been properly explained, for although Cobbett gives his own version of the transaction, and attributes the refusal to his alleged indecorous conduct on board the *Importer*, yet it is evident, that some other reasons actually existed, and which, we are in some degree warranted in conjecturing, were well known to Cobbett, but which, from prudential motives, he refrained from exposing.

Having obtained the inestimable treasure of the bones of Paine, he sailed in the *Hercules*, and on the 20th November,

found himself lying off the town of Liverpool, from which place he had embarked about two years previously, compelled to expatriate himself from the mere dread of an act, which had been scarcely called into operation, and none of the clauses of which he had yet infringed.

As soon as it was known in Liverpool, that Cobbett was amongst the passengers of the *Hercules*, a great number of his friends and political adherents hastened to the shore, in order to greet him on his return once more amongst them. On landing, he was received by them with all the fervour that men can express when they behold once more a friend whom they had respected, at the same time, that some hisses were also heard, which were presumed to arise more from the extraordinary circumstance of his being the importer of the bones of Paine, than from any motive of personal disrespect. In the evening, accompanied by Mr. Egerton Smith, he visited several of his friends, and on the following morning, he proceeded to the Custom House, whither his luggage had been brought up from the vessel, to undergo the usual inspection, and where a number of persons had congregated to see him. When the last trunk was opened and sundry deeds and manuscripts removed, a division of woollen appeared, and Cobbett standing up, said to the surrounding spectators, "Here are the bones of the late Thomas Paine." This intelligence excited a sudden and visible sensation, and the crowd pressed forward to see the contents of the package. Cobbett remarked, "Great indeed must that man have been, whose very bones attracted such attention." The officer took out the coffin plate, inscribed, "Thomas Paine, aged 74, died 8th June 1809," and having lifted up several of the bones, replaced the whole, and passed them. They were immediately sent off to London; Cobbett is said to have apostrophized the skull of Paine, but whether in the style of Hamlet, or that of Yorick, is not mentioned.

As soon as it was understood that the stay of Mr. Cobbett in Liverpool, would not exceed a very few days, the reformers announced their intention of giving him a public dinner on

his return to England. To effect their purpose, and to ascertain his own opinion upon the subject, a letter signed by some of the most influential of the party was addressed to him, requesting an answer as to his acquiescence or refusal to meet them on the occasion. To this letter Mr. Cobbett returned an answer of some length, together with the following brief note.

“ TO THE PEOPLE OF LIVERPOOL.

“Liverpool, Nov. 24th, 1819.

“On the day of my landing here, I promised my friends, who were anxious to see me, that I would give them an opportunity of doing it before my departure. In fulfilment of this promise, I intend to be at a public meeting in Clayton square on Friday, the 26th instant, at twelve o'clock.

(Signed) “WILLIAM COBBETT.”

Friday morning was remarkably unfavourable for the meeting, the snow and sleet fell copiously, and visibly damped the ardour of the Liverpool reforming patriots. Various accounts have been published of this meeting, not two of which agree as to the manner in which it was conducted; one representing that Cobbett was received with the expressions of the most ardent enthusiasm, whilst the others declare, that he met with the most violent hisses and other tokens of disapprobation. He arrived in a hackney coach, accompanied by his son William, Mr. Thomas Smith, and one or two other individuals. The applauses and hisses were continued with great vehemence, and several contests took place between the contending parties. In one or two instances, attacks were made on persons, who had the temerity to express their disapprobation of Cobbett, and they were roughly handled by the mob for it. Several false alarms of danger, were in the course of the performance raised; and it afforded not a little amusement to see the trepidation, with which great numbers fled from the square, through the different streets, which lead out of it. Cobbett endeavoured

repeatedly to obtain a hearing, but so loud was the storm, and so great the confusion that prevailed amongst the multitude, that none but the favoured few around the carriage could catch with accuracy the purport of his observation. They were, however, directed to two points; the statement of his motives for bringing the bones of Paine from America, which certainly had raised up against him a host of enemies, and the necessity of a reform in the Commons House of Parliament, and a detail of the plan of reform. After the coach had remained about a quarter of an hour in the ground where it first drew up, it was removed to another part of the square, and the orator proceeded with his speech with less interruption, than before. In the conclusion of his harangue, he informed the multitude that it was his intention to offer himself as a member for the city of Chichester, where there was then a vacancy, in consequence of the Earl of March having been called to the House of Peers, and that he had already sent off his address to the electors of that place.

The following was certainly not written by one of Cobbett's partizans, or one who admired either the man or his principles, but we will not alter the style of it.

"A most august and impressive ceremony now took place. The deputies from the reformers of Manchester, amongst whom was the celebrated Mr. Johnson, and who had been standing during the delivery of the speech at the side of the carriage, with the addresses in their hands, were *graciously* permitted to enter the carriage. They approached the great man with becoming reverence, and were received with the most affable condescension; Mr. Johnson holding his credentials in his hand, and taking off his hat, proceeded to address Cobbett in a strain of diffidence and humility. The worthy deputy's speech could not be heard, but he appeared as if conscious of being in the presence of a superior genius. Cobbett listened to him with dignified attention. Mr. Johnson then presented addresses from Manchester, Warrington, Blackburn, Bolton, and other places; amongst them was one from a female reform society. Cobbett received the addresses

in the most gracious manner, and briefly expressed his thanks for the honour which the reformers of Lancashire had conferred upon him by their attention on the present occasion. He then took leave of the multitude, and the coach drove from the square; when it had reached the top of Hanover-street, the horses were taken off, and Cobbett was drawn to his lodgings by the populace.

"In the evening, the dinner given to Cobbett in honour of his arrival in England, took place at the Castle Inn, Lord-street. The company who sat down to it did not exceed sixty, Mr. Thomas Smith was in the chair. It was a truly radical meeting; nothing but the radical beverage, water, was on the table during dinner, of which the company took copious libations. Many, however, did not relish such insipid beverage, and suffered the force of habit, or the cravings of appetite to predominate over a sense of public duty in abstaining from every taxable commodity. Mr. Cobbett, however, remained true to the radical resolution, and magnanimously abstained from drinking any thing but pure water.

"After the cloth had been removed, the chairman proceeded with the toasts, amongst which was the following:

"'The memory of our famous countryman, Thomas Paine, the NOBLE OF NATURE; THE CHILD OF THE LOWER ORDERS; illustrious from his unrivalled talents, and still more illustrious from the employment of those talents in the cause of the oppressed of all nations.'

"The chairman then proposed the health of Cobbett, which was drank with thunders of applause.

"Cobbett addressed the company in a long speech. He first noticed the slanders, which had been heaped upon him during his absence from England, and which, he said, were not only false, but atrocious and unmanly, but he had to thank the good sense of the country, for having rendered them of no effect. He then proceeded to the subject of parliamentary reform. Upon the present corrupt state of the representative system, and the necessity, nature, and extent

of reform, he descanted at some length. He then adverted to the subject of the bones of Thomas Paine, and entered into a long justification of his motives for disinterring and bringing them to England. He then proceeded to defend himself from the charge of inconsistency, which had been brought against him, in having once abused the very man, whose bones he now intended to honour. This he did by urging the plea of immaturity of judgment and want of experience at the time he attacked Paine, and because Paine was then supporting the enemies of his country. Conscious that he had done Paine an injustice in his early days, he was willing on his return to America to listen to a suggestion of Mr. Benbows to bring his bones to England. His remains had been dishonoured in America, though he was the founder of her independence, for he was the first man to propose the declaration against England, though the proposal was opposed by the celebrated Dr. Franklin. With respect to his object in bringing these bones to England, it was to have them exhibited in London *to as many persons as might choose to come to see them*. He intended to do every thing he could to raise a sufficient sum, in order that a colossal statue might be erected to Paine's memory, and if he lived, he hoped to execute his purpose.

"Cobbett retired from the dinner about eleven o'clock, followed by a great number of his friends."

On the 28th of November, Mr. Cobbett took leave of his friends in Liverpool, for the purpose of visiting a number of his acquaintance at Manchester. At Irlam, a place about ten miles from the last named town, he stopped for a short time to take some refreshment, and before he could again start on his journey, a messenger arrived from Manchester with a letter from the boroughreeve and constables, urging upon him the impolicy of his entering a town, which had recently been the scene of a dreadful conflict between the cavalry yeomanry, and the people, who had assembled with Mr. Hunt for the purpose of petitioning for parliamentary reform. The following is a copy of the letter.

" Sir,

" Manchester, Nov. 28th, 1819.

" Having reason to believe that your introduction into the town of Manchester, on Monday the 29th instant, is intended to be public, and to be accompanied by an unusual procession and multitude of people, as well strangers, as inhabitants, we, the undersigned, being boroughreeves and constables of the towns of Manchester and Salford, beg to inform you, that we consider such an assemblage of a great mass of the population of this district, in the present situation of the country, is necessarily attended with considerable danger to the public peace. We do, therefore, caution you against making any public entry into the town of Manchester, and if you persist in so doing, or if you adopt any other proceeding, whereby the public peace may be broken or endangered, we shall feel it our indispensable duty immediately to interfere.

" We are,

" Sir,

" Your obedient servants.

Thomas Sharp	Boroughreeve	} Manchester.	
John Orford	Constables		
Richard Smith			
I. E. Scholes	Boroughreeve	} Salford."	
T. Mariot	Constables		
S. Mathews			

Upon receiving this letter, Mr. Cobbett immediately replied to Messrs. the Boroughreeves and Constables, in the following terms.

" Gentlemen,

" Irlam, Nov. 29th, 1819.

" If it had come from any other person in this world, the notification which I have just received from you, would have surprised me. Coming from you, it excites no surprise, nor any sort of feeling towards you, which was not before

entertained by every just man in every part of the world where your deeds and character have been heard of.

"But, Gentlemen, is it really come to this, that a man upon returning to his country, or upon moving from one part of England to another, is to be stopped on his way by threats of interference on the part of officers appointed to keep the peace, lest the concourse of people which his mere presence may draw together should produce danger of a breach of the public peace? Is it really come to this? Is this the state of England? Is this the law? Is this one of the effects of that system, which we are told is so excellent that it requires no reform? The laws of England secure to us the right of loco-motion, that is to say, the right of moving our bodies from one place to another. Now, if your notification be any thing more than a mere empty putting forth of words, it presumes that you have a right to prevent me from enjoying this liberty of loco-motion, for you tell me you shall *interfere*, if I persist in my intention of making a public entry into your town; and alas! we know too well what you mean by *interference*. And what do you mean by public entry? What do you mean, I say, by *public* entry? How am I to make any other than a public entry, if I enter at all? Like other persons, my intention must have been to enter your town in a carriage, or on horseback, or on foot? Are not these the ways in which all other persons enter? and have I not a right to enter as other persons do? Either, therefore, you must mean to forbid me to enter at all, or you must mean that I shall move like the women of the seraglio of the dey of Algiers, shut up in a box with large air holes in it, or ride upon a horse, my body and head being covered with a species of tub. This is the state, is it, to which the system has brought once free and happy England?

"To what a pitch must men have arrived, when they could sit down and look at one another in the face, while they wrote and signed a paper, such as that you sent me. This paper was addressed to a man having no power and no inclination to disturb the public peace, a man who, with the

knowledge of recent events daily impressed upon his mind, has taken the precaution to beseech the people not to mix up a reception of him with even an allusion to those events. It appears manifest, that the public peace could not have been endangered from my entrance into Manchester. But to see such multitudes of people assembled together to show their respect for me, appeared to be more than you could endure. We read the accounts of the prince of Saxe-Coburg, the Marquis of Anglesea, the Duke of Wellington, and other *great* personages, moving here and there amidst public plaudits. Infinite pains at any rate are taken to make us believe that this is the case. What right, therefore, have you to make any attempt either directly or indirectly to prevent the people from bestowing their applause upon me in person? Is not my right to move from place to place as perfect as any of the three men that I have just mentioned. Aye, but then the assemblages that they cause are so *small*.

“ Suppose I were at this moment living at an inn at Manchester, it is pretty clear, I believe, that an assembly of persons would take place at any time that I chose to walk out to the spot, where the dreadful scenes of the 16th of August were exhibited. What, then, would you expel me your towns, or compel me to keep myself shut up in a room? And if the people presumed to come to show me marks of their respect, would you visit them with your awful *interference*? Gentlemen, we shall live to see the day, and that day is not far distant, when I shall be able to visit the excellent people of Manchester, and its neighbourhood, without you daring to step in between us with threats of interference.

“ Let me call on you to think a little on the figure you now make in the world. Here I am at ten miles from Manchester, there are the people whom you call an unusual multitude, ready to receive me, and to bestow upon me all possible marks of respect, and there are you sending me threats of interference, and preparing all sorts of means for making that interference effectual, in order to intercept a verbal expression of popular approbation, intended to be be-

stowed upon a man destitute of every species of means of obtaining that approbation, other than the means naturally arising from his integrity and his talents, his well known love for his country, and his well known zeal in her cause, during the whole course of his life, under all circumstances, whether abroad or at home, whether in prosperity or adversity.

“ Thus the parties stand before the world. I disdain to tell you what my intentions are, whether I intend to enter Manchester or not. I have made this comment upon your communication, in order that the nature of your conduct may be the better understood, and even in doing this, I have condescended to bestow on you too great an honour.

“ With feelings, such as a real friend of the people, a real lover of his country, and faithful subject of the king must ever entertain towards men like you,

“ I am,

“ WILLIAM COBBETT.”

Having despatched this severe reply to the worthy borough-reeves and constables of Manchester and Salford, Mr. Cobbett began to think more calmly upon the subject, and to place things in a truer light before his own mind. He now foresaw the greatest danger lurking behind him, if he should unwittingly throw himself within the power of those, who would gladly have proved themselves the instruments of his destruction. Millions of eyes were anxiously fixed upon his every movement, in order to seize upon the first opportunity of fixing him with some vamped up charge of sedition or treason, that would be sufficient to throw him entirely on the tender mercies of those who had hitherto regarded him with a hatred the most profound. They only hoped for some such opportunity, and had Cobbett been a man of less judgment or penetration, the natural warmth of his temper would undoubtedly have led him into the commission of some act or other, that would have been twisted and tortured into a treasonable attempt against the life of our sovereign king, his crown, and dignity.

On first receiving the above-named *polite* note or warning

from the worthy officials of Manchester, the natural obstinacy of his disposition prevailed, and he determined, let the consequences to himself be what they might, to visit his friends at Manchester, and thus prove to his vile aspersers, that he could by his own influence gather together a large assemblage of persons, restrain them from acts of violence, and eventually disperse each man to his home without the commission of even a single outrage. A little reflection, however, changed this hastily formed resolution; his carriage was at the door, and stepping into it, he desired the driver to take a more circuitous route, and thus avoid Manchester, and the evil consequences that might have arisen had he ventured to carry his original design into execution.

In the meantime, the female reformers of Manchester had been anxiously looking out for the arrival of their champion, to whom it was their intention to have presented a most elegant silver inkstand, and to deliver to him an address of congratulation on his safe arrival in his native land. The lady reformers, accused him of a want of gallantry, the gentlemen of a want of spirit, and of a becoming confidence in their resolution to abstain from every act, which could be construed into a breach of the peace.

On arriving at Coventry, he drove to the Craven Arms Hotel, intending to stay there that night. He then immediately sent for a Mr. Lewis, who printed the Coventry Recorder, but being told he was in London, he sent for Mr. James Grant, at that time one of the principal leaders among the radical reformers, who shortly waited upon him, and the evening was passed together, talking over the then threatening aspect of the political horizon. In the morning, after having partaken of his breakfast, perceiving that a large concourse of people had assembled round the house, for the purpose of welcoming him on his arrival amongst them, he threw up the window sash, and began addressing the concourse, whom he promised to meet at the end of the town, when he would address them in a speech, that should enlighten their understandings as to the dreadful state the country was in. He

then closed the window, but scarcely had he done so, when the landlord (a purse proud tory of course), sent him the following insolent note.

“Sir,

“You have taken an unwarrantable liberty in addressing the populace from the windows of my house, and I hereby request your immediate departure from it.

“To Mr. Cobbett.

“WILLIAM WHITLOCK.”

Immediately upon receiving this impertinent epistle, Mr. Cobbett sent for the landlord and asked him if he had written it; he told him he had, and the sooner he quitted the house the better. To this gentlemanly request, of course, Mr. Cobbett could offer no resistance, he at once ordered his chaise and during the time it was getting ready, a large placard was fastened to the windows of the same officious personage, stating that *the bones of Cobbett and Tom Paine are ordered to quit this house*. Cobbett then mounted the bar of the chaise, and with his hat in his hand, was driven to the extremity of the city of Coventry, where he addressed an assemblage of persons, who, not having their skins and purses so well filled as this insolent tavern keeper, were well pleased to hear the exposition with which he then favoured them.

The treatment which Cobbett received at Coventry was by no means calculated to flatter his vanity and self-love. He was assailed from every quarter by the most degrading epithets, some calling him a resurrection man, in allusion to Paine's bones, whilst others assailed him on the ground of his cowardice in flying to America, before any danger awaited him. Previously to his departure from Coventry, the following lines were put into his hands, entitled,

COBBEY'S DREAM.

The moon retired behind a cloud,
And fast asleep were young and old,
In nasal twangs, both long and loud;
“Past three o'clock,” had watchey told,

When Cobbey lay him down to snore.

His thoughts on *PAINES*, *CARLILE*, and *HONES*
When lo, a hollow voice did roar,
O give me back my pilfer'd bones.

Pale horror raised erect his hair,
Above the sheets he popped his chin,
And saw Tom Paine before him stare
With menacing terrific grin,
O rascal, why my name a fresh
Dost thou lug forth in canting tones,
The worms content were with my flesh,
But thou hast robbed me of my bones ;

Why didst thou on the billows toes,
Or why thy native country fled,
Why thou the vast Atlantic cross?
Why traitor, thief ! to rob the dead.
Lay by thy pen, cork up thine ink,
None read thee now but drivelling drones,
Thy boasted fame will end in stink,
So give me back my pilfer'd bones.

O scrub, how didst thou once becall
The wretched elf, thou now dost praise,
Prepare thee for thy destined fall,
Whence none give *two pence* thee to raise."
Awake, he cried, " *Avant ye fears !*
'Tis but a dream my mind dethroned,
Come, let me bellow in thy ears
I'll SEE THEE D—D, I'll KEEP THY BONES.'

On the arrival of Cobbett in London, the crests of the radicals, which had been for some time in a falling state, rose with increased pride, for their champion was returned to them, in whose powerful pen, they beheld the instrument, which was to lay their enemies prostrate, and crown their cause with triumph. His arrival at Liverpool was no sooner known than a gentleman of Westminster waited upon Mr. Hunt, and suggested that the return of Mr. Cobbett to England should be celebrated by a public dinner. Mr. Hunt acceded at once to this proposal, and in consequence, an advertisement was put into the public papers, when, as instantly no

less than forty persons offered themselves as stewards. A letter announcing this intention on the part of the radicals was forwarded to Mr. Cobbett at Liverpool, but he had left that place before the letter arrived, and it was not until his arrival in London on the Thursday preceding the dinner, that he was at all apprised of the manner in which his return to England was to be celebrated.

The dinner was accordingly held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, on the 3rd December, and at the hour announced for dinner above 400 persons had assembled, the meeting, however, were exposed to some inconvenience, for provision had only been made for about 200, and the bustle and anxiety in catering for the additional numbers that arrived, created considerable delay and impatience. Mr. Hunt was called to the chair, and this circumstance was greedily seized upon, by the opposite party to show the gross inconsistency of the character of Cobbett, and the apparent meanness of Hunt in presiding at a dinner given in honour of a man, who to use Cobbett's own words, had *blackguarded* him in every possible way that his fancy could devise. In fact, Hunt had not long taken his seat before a packet was delivered to him, containing a number of copies of the following extract from one of Cobbett's Registers.

"It is impossible for both factions united to calumniate our motives, if we proceed as we ought, and do not mix WITH MEN OF BAD CHARACTER. There is one HUNT, a Bristol man—beware of him. He rides about the country with a w——, the wife of another man, having deserted his own. HE IS A SAD FELLOW. HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH HIM.

This untoward circumstance threw a little damp upon the conviviality of the day, if such a meeting can be called convivial in its generally accepted sense, for when the cloth was withdrawn and Mr. Hunt rose to propose the first toast, he first complimented "the immense multitude" on their abstinence from wine and spirits, although unfortunately for the chairman, there were at that time about half a dozen

bottles of wine, and a bowl of punch on the table. Mr. Hunt, however, whose vision for the time must have been somewhat clouded, declared that he did not see a single bottle of wine on the table, and he sincerely trusted, that as the thing had begun, so it would end; that the enemies of radical reform would not see them reeling home dead drunk, and that the meeting would indeed prove "The feast of reason, and the flow of soul."

On the health of Mr. Cobbett being drunk, the "ardent and zealous defender of our rights and liberties, by whose luminous and incomparable writings the public opinion of the people of this country, had undergone a change unparalleled in the history of the world," and the toast having been drunk with three times three, Mr. Cobbett rose and prefaced his speech by observing that he thanked the company for the honour which they had just done him, but that he would be paying the company a bad compliment, if he did not consider that he was in reality deserving of that honour. He proceeded to notice the attacks which had been made upon him in his absence, for he well knew the prejudices and passions which actuated mankind. The road to eminence was rugged and steep, and those who travelled it, were like him, exposed to scorn, rebuffs, and jealousies. He felt nothing but contempt against his slanderers. He recollected that when young, he often acted from ignorance himself, but he had since seen his error, and he had no doubt that when he was dead, his surviving calumniators would be sorry for the injury which they had done his character. He then informed the company that it was impossible for him to say when parliamentary reform would be obtained, but he was *convinced* that it *never* would be obtained until *ministers relinquished the funded system*, it, however, appeared, that ministers were totally ignorant of what that funded system was, and, therefore, the chances of obtaining parliamentary reform were still greater against the people. He then proceeded to give the company *some* information about America, on which occasion he attributed the *whole* of the distresses of that country to the conduct of

one or two shabby Quakers, who had embarked in the paper money system and that one Jacob Barker was, in the opinion of Mr. Cobbett, as an issuer of paper money, one of the greatest delinquents that ever polluted the soil of America. From Jacob Barker, Mr. Cobbett passed to the bones of Thomas Paine, which he very truly designated as a ticklish subject. He confessed that he had written against Thomas Paine, and he was sorry for it, but at the same time, he confessed also that he had never read the works, which he had so abused and vilified, that he had read none of his works against christianity and therefore for aught he knew, Paine might be as good a believer as himself. Further Cobbett informed the company, that as soon as his eyes were opened as to the sickly state of "The old lady in Threadneedle street" and then looked into Paine, he felt convinced of his greatness, and that he had done him great injustice. He should never forget that Paine had foretold in 1796, the state of that old lady, and of her present quivering condition. He would certainly exert all his energies to have a statue or pedestal of bronze raised to the memory of the exalted Thomas Paine, whom he could not but designate, though rising himself from the lowest walks of life, *as the greatest enlightener of the human mind that ever lived.*"

Mr. Hunt then gave a toast. "The memory of the ennobled friend of nature, Thomas Paine, and may his calumniators imitate his virtues, and his friends avoid his errors."

On the toast being given, "Success to the Reformers of England, Ireland, and Scotland," Mr. Wooler made a long harangue, closing his speech with the following most equivocal sentence, and which was open to a certain construction, which Cobbett could not certainly consider as a compliment to him. "Cobbett," said Wooler, "had proposed a pedestal for Paine, *he would have Cobbett by the side of that great man, FOR THEY ARE WORTHY OF EACH OTHER IN THE EYES OF THE COUNTRY.*"

Mr. Wooler then proposed the health of Mr. Hunt, who in his speech defended himself from the imputation of being

concerned with Carlile. He declared he did not know him, and the chance alone of his having a cause of his own in the King's Bench, he met him there upon his trial, and *from humanity assisted him*. He afterwards offered to be his bail, but from no religious motive, as *he declared he had never read or even heard of the works of Thomas Paine, until the trial of Carlile took place!!* He had learnt at one time to detest that man, having seen his effigy burnt in his youth, and he would add, that if his mind was not made up on the subject, the conduct of the deists in not bailing Carlile, would at once determine that point. He finally recommended abstinence and early hours to the reformers. *Hot water and ginger had served him for a complaint in the stomach instead of gin.*

After a few more unimportant toasts, the company broke up, but as Cobbett was leaving the tavern, he was arrested by one of the Middlesex officers for a debt contracted previously to his departure from this country. He was, however, subsequently bailed by Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Dolby, the publisher of his Register.

The latter incident serves to prove how constantly his enemies were at work to annoy, even to ruin him. It was hoped that a gaol would now be his future doom, and that being thus in some degree separated from the other reformers, he would become more pliant to the will of the government, and that if not an advocate of their unjust measures, he would at least cease to annoy them with his perpetual abuse of their infamous policy.

In the mean time, the speculation of Cobbett in the importation of Paine's bones turned out to be a decided failure, and in fact, he began to feel that he had committed a most egregious blunder. He certainly dilated largely on the value of his treasure, but he could not get many to be of the same opinion as himself. With the more serious and reflecting part of the community, his valuable ossifications produced rather disgust, than either admiration or approbation; and with those, who treated them with levity, he became the favourite object of their ridicule and mockery. To complete the farce, a report was circulated

that Cobbett had made a grievous mistake, and that instead of the bones of Paine, he had brought away with him, those of an old negro, who had been buried by his side, whilst another version of the tale was, that some mischievous wittings had taken the opportunity of exchanging the bones of Paine, for those of an old woman ; at all events, the business became to Cobbett any thing but one of gain or pleasure. He found himself continually annoyed by lampoons of the following tendency.

Cobbett, through all his life a cheat,
Yet as a rogue was incomplete,
For now to prove a finished knave
To dupe and trick, he robs a grave,

The radicals seem quite e ated,
And soon will be intoxicated
For Cobbett means to turn their brain
With his American SHAM PAINE.

Cobbett made an attempt to get up a dinner on Paine's birthday, but the demand for tickets was very small, and finally, the projector was saved the mortification that awaited him, had the festival taken place, by the refusal of the landlord of the tavern, where it was to have been held, to lend his house for such a purpose.

Whatever may have been the greatness of the intellectual character of Cobbett, it cannot be disguised, that on several occasions he descended to the commission of many petty acts in his private transactions, which his friends could not approve of, and of which his enemies greedily and joyfully laid hold, wherewith to depreciate his character, and to lower him in the estimation of the people of this country. A man of inferior power would have been irretrievably ruined, had he taken some of the steps, which marked the conduct of Cobbett, and from the consequences of which he was in a great degree able to save himself by the vastness of his resources, and by his unparalleled energy and perseverance, that enabled him to bear up against the torrent of public opinion, which on several occasions set in decidedly against him.

At this time scarcely a Register appeared, in which Cobbett did not refer to the bones of Paine as a treasure beyond all price, and expressed his determination of rendering them some signal marks of honour. The public, however, appeared to Cobbett to be stricken with an obtuseness respecting the value of these bones, which he could not account for as emanating from an enlightened people, but in order to stimulate them to some sense of respect for his adopted idol, he proposed that a magnificent funeral should take place, but not until the arrival of the season, when twenty wagon-load of flowers could be procured from all the gardens in the suburbs of the metropolis, wherewith to strew the path, on which the bones of "the ennobled of nature," as Cobbett now styled Paine, were to be borne. A splendid monument was also to be erected, but as the means to carry these measures into effect were not exactly at hand, Cobbett set his ingenuity to work and devised the following scheme, which was either too deep for some to understand, or too shallow for others to be taken in with. In addition to the wagon-loads of flowers, and other funeral and monumental honours, locks of hair of the deceased "noble of nature" were to be distributed amongst his admirers, as appropriate memorials of the man, whom Cobbett now delighted to honour. The question was, indeed, mooted by some cavillers, that if the demand for these locks should be great, from what quarter was the supply to be obtained, but Cobbett assured these sceptical gentlemen, that he had an ample supply on hand to satisfy all demands, and he would not hesitate to warrant the genuineness of the article. These love-locks were to be placed in gold rings, but in order to secure the precious relic from the dishonesty or rather from the waggery of the goldsmiths, the hair was never to be out of the possession of Cobbett until it was fairly and honestly soldered up in the rings; and as a further guarantee to the purchasers, the latter operation was to be performed in the presence of Cobbett, or some one named by him. These rings were to be sold to all, who willing to possess such an inestimable treasure, and

should the demand amount to twenty thousand, the stock of hair on hand was amply sufficient for the purpose. Nor did Cobbett consider that the demand was exorbitant, considering the intrinsic value of the lock, as he *only* charged one guinea for each, exclusive of the goldsmith's charge for gold and workmanship. Thus, the cheering prospect opened itself to Cobbett of reaping not a little profit from the honoured bones, or rather the honoured hair, of "the noble of nature." The whole scheme, however, turned out to be a complete bubble, the people designated it as a bare-faced, impudent hoax, not a single ring was made, for none were ever demanded. After this attempt, the bones and the hair of Paine, might, for aught the public knew, have been placed in the tomb of all the Capulets, for Cobbett observed a studied silence about them, and the public did not appear to be in the least disposed to break it.

It was generally allowed, even by the warmest partizans of Cobbett, that this experiment, not only upon the taste, but also upon the purse of the public, was highly detrimental to his reputation; they saw in it an attempt to raise a sum of money by the actual means of fraud and deception, for it was well known that at the time of Paine's death, he was almost bald, and that in fact the hair, which Cobbett alleged as having once adorned the head of "the noble of nature," was to have been supplied from the sweepings of the floor of some barber's shop.

A very short time had elapsed after Cobbett's return from America, when an attempt was made to effect a reconciliation between him and Sir Francis Burdett, the latter of whom had taken great offence at some aspersions thrown out against him by Cobbett in his Registers, as well as on account of some pecuniary transactions, which had passed between them. For the better understanding of the causes of the quarrel, and in order to place the character of the two litigants in their proper light, it will be necessary to state some facts which took place when the two reformers were staunch friends, and when their combined popularity, con-

tributed essentially to the diffusion of those political principles, which gained for them the applause and approbation of every true lover of the British constitution.

Cobbett has been frequently, and not without good cause, accused of political apostacy, and since the change in his politics in 1805, he had unflinchingly and with his customary talent advocated the principles of Sir Francis Burdett. He had mixed himself up with his elections for Westminster with all the influence of his person and all the power of his pen, and to those very elections are the public indebted for some of the most masterly productions of Cobbett's genius. He was, however, not only the partizan, but the friend of, Sir Francis, for not only a personal, but a political intimacy existed between them. When Cobbett was released from the prison of Newgate, Sir Francis was the chairman of a dinner that was given to Cobbett at the Crown and Anchor, and it was well known, that during his imprisonment, he had received many unequivocal proofs of the Baronet's friendship. This intimacy between the two renowned reformers was maintained until the month of February, 1817, when it was suddenly broken off, and no intercourse afterwards took place between them, even up to the time of Cobbett's death.

During the existence of the intimacy, Sir Francis, with the view of relieving Cobbett from some pecuniary demands which were pressing heavily upon him, advanced him the sum of two thousand pounds, and here the difference arose, Sir Francis contending that it was a loan, and Cobbett maintaining that it was a gift. However, to which ever character the advance belonged, the sum was never afterwards repaid; a fact, which has always been taken hold of by the enemies of Cobbett, as indicative of his want of honour or principle in the discharge of his pecuniary obligations. It must be fairly owned, that Cobbett had turned round upon Sir Francis with a hatred violent in proportion to his former friendship, and the attack which he then began upon "Westminster's glory" was continued up to the last years of his life, with a perseverance at once unceasing and vindictive.

Sir Francis, it must be confessed, returned some of these assaults with interest, and then began the many imputations, criminations, and recriminations about the two thousand pounds. "But," says Cobbett, "he himself never for one moment regarded any part or portion of this transaction as being dishonest on my part. He was angry he had carried his liberty doctrine so far, and in some respects too far, that he began to wish that he could stop a little short of that which he had so long professed in his more giddy days. *Though he had a great opinion of me*, he was displeased with me because I would not let him stop, because I would pull him along, or push him along, or else assail him. This was the fact, and then he said and wrote, while he was angry, that which he did not think, and which he never could have thought."

[In order to show that Cobbett was here in an error, and that Sir Francis Burdett had not a great opinion of him, we subjoin a letter of the baronet's, in answer to an application made to him to attend a meeting for the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of so great a man. It is, however, worthy of remark, that Sir Francis makes the sum due to him as £8000, which, at compound interest for fourteen years since the money was lent, makes the money lent to be £4000, which is the exact sum mentioned by the Quarterly Review (see page 197, vol. 2. of this work).

The latter part of Sir Francis' letter must be highly gratifying to the committee for the erection of the monument.

"Sir,

"I am directed by the Provisional Committee to acquaint you that the public meeting for originating a subscription for erecting a monument to the memory of the late William Cobbett, M.P., will be held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, on Monday, the 13th of June next; and that Daniel O'Connell, Esq., M. P., has promised to take the chair.

"I am further directed to express the anxious hope of the

committee that you will favour them with your presence and powerful influence; and, as it is desirable to make proper arrangements for Members of Parliament and others who may attend the meeting, I shall feel obliged by a letter expressive of your intentions.

" I have the honour to be,

" Sir,

" J. OLDFIELD, Secretary.

" To Sir Francis Burdett. " 11, Bolt-court, Fleet-street."

" Sir,

" A letter from you, dated the 16th of May, having followed me here, I lose not a moment in returning, according to your request, an answer.

" You invite me to a meeting to be held on the 13th of the month, at the Crown and Anchor, at which Mr. D. O'Connell is to preside, for the purpose of raising a subscription for a monument to be erected to the memory of the late Mr. Cobbett. The application is *unique*, as the French say, seeing that whoever attends that meeting becomes a public voucher, for the honesty, disinterestedness, and patriotism of the said Mr. Cobbett. Now, as I believe, or rather know, the reverse, and as all the world besides know my opinion and experience thereon, it would be something worse than foolish in me to attend such a meeting, and I can only wonder at the application. At the same time, I cannot but acknowledge that the United Empire could not furnish a more appropriate chairman. Nor can I offer to the committee any contribution more appropriate than Mr. Cobbett's bonds now in my possession, which, as considerably more than fourteen years have elapsed since the money was lent, will amount to considerably more than £8000. I trust the committee will think this a handsome and suitable offer.

" I remain,

" Gentlemen,

" Your most obedient servant,

" Leamington, June 1st, 1836.

" F. BURDETT."]

Cobbett was at this time in Long Island, and his Registers, which contained his attacks upon Sir Francis, were forwarded to this country, so that it was in his absence that the aspersions about the money were first thrown out. - On the return of Cobbett to England a reconciliation, more on political than personal grounds, was thought advisable by the friends of Cobbett, and accordingly a friend of the latter waited upon Sir Francis, with the view of bringing about that desirable event. The baronet, however, was found to be inexorable. He said Mr. Cobbett could not forget the many falsehoods published in the Twopenny Register, which the writer must have known, if true or false. If true, no honest man would wish to renew an acquaintance with him, (Sir Francis) and if false, what could be thought of the individual promulgating such atrocious calumnies, with the knowledge of their being such," Here the conversation ended, and Mr. Cobbett's friend retired.

Cobbett gives the following explanation of this affair :

"When I was at Liverpool, I was strongly urged in private, and even by a speech, a very eloquent speech of one of the gentlemen at a dinner given to me there to unite with Sir Francis Burdett. A similar request, and from persons on whose judgment I set great value, was made to me at New York. As I came on to London, I perceived that the wish was very general. While at New York I had read Sir Francis' Letter to the Electors of Westminster upon the Manchester tragedy, of which letter I very much approved. I had read also an account of the proceedings in Palace yard, relative to the Manchester transactions, and in those proceedings, I thought I perceived what amounted to a proof of Sir Francis' desire to co-operate with Mr. Hunt. My determination from the moment I read of those proceedings, was this, that when I came to England, I would bury, with regard to the baronet, all the past in oblivion, and that if he were disposed to exert himself to his utmost in behalf of the people, to co-operate cordially with him. At the dinner at Liverpool, I declared my readiness to be the first to move, and to go to

him and in the language of Scripture to say, "Is it peace?" When I came to London, a gentleman from the country, in a day or two after the dinner at the Crown and Anchor, asked me whether there were no means of producing a reconciliation between Sir Francis and myself. After some conversation upon the subject, I gave this gentleman his commission in the following terms :

" Dec. 4th, 1820.

" I am ready to tender my hand to Sir Francis Burdett, and to tender my whole heart and mind to be exerted in co-operation with him, for the purpose of endeavouring to rescue our country from the fangs of its oppressors. I am ready to bury all private considerations in oblivion. I have seen all through the country, proofs of a most ardent desire, that a union should take place, and I am resolved that no private feelings of mine shall obstruct that union.

(Signed) " WILLIAM COBBETT."

At the same time that I delivered this paper, I told the gentleman, who was the bearer of it, what I had told all my English friends at New York, and what I told to particular friends at Liverpool, that I never would be the underworker of Sir Francis Burdett again, and that I would have nothing to do with him any more than with any other common person ; that I never would consult with him, and in short that I would have nothing in the shape of co-operation with him, except as one of a public meeting, perhaps, UNLESS HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY, AND OUT OF HIS OWN PURSE, FURNISH THE MEANS OF FACILITATING, AS SOON AS THE OCCASION SHOULD OFFER, THE ENTRANCE OF MR. HUNT AND MYSELF INTO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. And this I told the gentleman who was the bearer of the paper, and that he had full liberty to state it to any person whatever either in conversation or in print. This gentleman expressed his wish that these terms might be communicated to Sir Francis Burdett by myself, which I had no objection, and I told him I should give the

terms in writing, with permission to their being published as soon as Sir Francis chose, and with a declaration on my part that I should make them known to the public without loss of time.

“ The reasoning on which I proceeded was this: *Sir Francis Burdett has now no influence*, no weight of character more than a common man. He is unable to give me any support or aid. I can derive no assistance from his mere name or countenance, I can gain no weight of character; no power to do good by the mere circumstance of intimate co-operation with him. But he has the power to put me in a situation where I shall be able to do for the good of my country ten thousand times as much as I am able to do with my pen alone. He has ample means to effect this object. To him it would be a sacrifice, if a sacrifice at all, not worth a moment's thought. If, therefore, he will not do this, I shall lose in point of consequence and influence, or by any intimate communication that shall be known to take place between him and me, and though I am not requested to tender any such terms on the part of Mr. Hunt, I think his services to the public give him a fair claim to be included in the negotiation. I observed at the same time, that I could perceive no ground for preferring Sir Francis Burdett, before any other common man of ordinary talent, unless the preference were given on the score of his fortune, and that this fortune ought to be no ground of preference, unless the fortune were to be brought into action in favour of the cause: Suppose there are two men, alike in all other respects, both friends to reform, both zealous in the cause; their talents equal and their courage equal, only the one has great heaps of money, and the other has none. Now what baseness is it to pretend that the poor man is not of equal value to the rich man, unless the rich man puts his hand into one of his bags in order to furnish the means of surpassing the poor man's single exertions. This was the ground that I proceeded upon, and I am very certain that this ground will be regarded as perfectly good by

every one, who is not servile enough to say that mere money ought to be preferred to every thing else.

“On the 9th December I received the following note from the gentleman, who had been the bearer of the paper above inserted.

‘DEAR SIR,

‘From a conversation I have just had with Sir Francis Burdett, I am persuaded the enclosed cannot be rendered available. This causes me regret, but I have thought it best to return it to you with my assurance, that it has not been used nor seen.’

“This was the whole that took place with any knowledge of mine.”

The foregoing most extraordinary document on the part of Cobbett, requires little comment, it speaks most loudly for itself, and perhaps as a specimen of sophistical reasoning, its parallel will be difficult to be found. According to Cobbett's own statement, he had determined whilst in America to offer the olive branch to Sir Francis Burdett, but then no mention whatever is made of the onerous proviso, by which Sir Francis was to purchase the co-operation of Mr. Cobbett, and not only of him, but of Mr. Hunt. Now it does not appear that the baronet had at any time expressed his desire for the co-operation of either of those gentlemen, but he was now to be called upon to purchase it at the expence of two seats in parliament, and the most extraordinary feature of this transaction is, that Cobbett must have known that there was not a borough in England that would return him as its member, if such return depended upon the mere suffrages. How then was Sir Francis Burdett to obtain the return of the two radicals to parliament? The baronet had frequently himself experienced the expences of contested elections, and therefore, were he disposed to accede to the exorbitant terms of Mr. Cobbett, there was no other way of seating him in par-

liament, than by one of those "villain boroughmongers," whom Cobbett himself had been so unmercifully lashing for the last dozen years of his life. On the other hand, Sir Francis Burdett might have felt disposed, previously to entering into any negotiation for a seat in parliament for Cobbett, to investigate rather closely the value of the thing he was to purchase, and whether it were in reality worth the price he was called upon to pay for it. Perhaps he had arrived at a private opinion of his own, that the House of Commons was not a sphere in which Mr. Cobbett would be of much use, but rather whether he would not actually prove an injury to the cause, which he was exerting himself to promote, at all events, it would have been only politic and sensible in Cobbett to have ascertained the private sentiments of Sir Francis on the subject, before he publicly sent forth the grounds on which his co-operation was to be obtained. The whole statement, however, of Cobbett, is replete with deep finesse and subtlety; when he sent forth his statement to the public containing his proviso, that a seat in parliament should be the price of his reconciliation with Sir Francis, it was well known to him that the baronet had fully, and explicitly rejected his overtures, and as he did not wish it to be thought that the proposed reconciliation should be refused by Sir Francis, he tries to impress upon the minds of the public, that he himself would not accede to it, unless Sir Francis agreed to the performance of such conditions, which no one but a fool or a madman would have imposed upon him. Mr. Cobbett talks of obtaining two seats in parliament, as a sacrifice not worthy of a moment's thought by Sir Francis Burdett; which shows that Cobbett was well aware *that Sir Francis must have purchased those seats*, and it would certainly have been a delectable *bonne bouche* for the enemies of Cobbett, to see him seated in a parliament, which he had characterized as composed of a herd of venal slaves—the tools of the boroughmongers and himself adding to the number.

In regard, however, to the affair between Cobbett and Burdett, when the former was attacked by the Morning Chronicle,

with a spirit approaching to fierceness, he sent forth the following defence.

“ Having mentioned the affair of Burdett, I will here for about the hundredth time expose the infamous lie which has been circulated, and is still circulated with regard to that affair. Let it be a loan, which it was not; but let it be a loan. I owed it him then; and the story is, that I, owing it him, wrote to him from America to say, that I would not pay him. Now the senselessness of this lie, one would think would cause it to be universally disbelieved. I was attacking him at the time, I was accusing him distinctly of having abandoned the reformers in the months of February and March 1817, I was laying it upon him with a heavy hand. I was telling him that I would bring him down, though it might cost me about ten years to do it, and at this time, I was writing to him, and acknowledging the debt, and telling him that I would never pay him. This is a thing not to be believed of a sane person. I was in Long Island, to be sure, but a power of attorney and writ would have stripped me of every thing I possessed in that country, down to the very bed that I lay in. But, as if this were not daring enough, I came to England in a year and a half after I had told him, that I never would pay him. And I came to London, too, at about the end of that year and a half. What! come across the sea on purpose to put myself within his reach after having stirred up his animosity, and declared that I never would pay him. The fact is, that I knew what he had said in his anger, he never would swear, and therefore I was sure that he never would commence a suit against me for that money. Very soon, however, after my arrival, he had an opportunity of swearing, if he chose, for I became a bankrupt; of which he was duly informed, of course; to prove his debt, he must swear to the debt, but though invited to do so by Mr Brown, he never did it, and the truth is never would he have said a word about the matter, had it not been for his anger at the attacks, which I had made upon him.

“ But did I then never tell him that I would not pay him?

Verbally this is impossible, because he and I were intimate until the month of February 1817, and we have never spoken together from that time to this. Was it in writing? then he has the letter, and then he can produce it, but I will state the substance of the contents of the letter alluded to, and then the reader will see the peg upon which this abominable lie has been hung, and a member of parliament, whom I will not now name, will take care how he again makes allusion to any thing resting on such a foundation.

"In Long Island, about the spring of 1818, having had time then to learn all the waste, the spoliation, the total annihilation of all my property in England of every description, I wrote a circular letter to all those to whom I owed money in England, amongst whom I included the baronet. I had been driven away from what was then become really an enormous income. Sidmouth and Castlereagh's powers of Imprisonment Bill had been passed, my choice lay between flight and a dungeon; the laws of personal liberty were abrogated as far as related to me.* In writing the above circular letter, I made observations of this sort 'That the laws of civil society made it incumbent on men to pay the debts which they had contracted in that society, but that if a partial tyranny arose, depriving a portion of the society of the power of pursuing the calling which they had pursued while the debt was contracted, and if the society as a whole, were either unwilling or unable to abate such tyranny, then that society had no right to demand the payment of debts due from those, who had been prescribed by that tyranny,

* This statement of Cobbett's is not borne out by the fact. The Six Acts Bill contained no retrospective power of punishing a man for what he had already done. It was enacted to prevent the future commission of those acts, which endangered the safety of the state, and until Cobbett did actually commit one of those acts, his personal liberty was secured to him. The option was his own between liberty and imprisonment; he might be assured of the undisturbed enjoyment of the former, so long as he brought not himself under the penal clauses of the Six Acts Bill; he knew well how far he could go without subjecting himself to the penalties of that bill, and if he did actually exceed those limits, he had only himself to blame if a dungeon became his lot.

any more than you have a right to demand of a man the performance of a foot race, which he has contracted to perform, you having first given your assent to the cutting off of one of his legs. But after having stated this doctrine, I expressly told him in that same letter, that in his case, I would waive every such right of refusal, but that as soon I was able, I would satisfy his claim to the last penny, and that no exertion on my part should be wanting for the purpose of effecting that object. If this be not a true statement of the substance of the letter, let him produce the letter.'

"However at last came the bankruptcy, and then the creditor were paid at any rate, as far as the law could pay him. As I said before, he never came to prove his debt, and I was sure he never would, and I owe him nothing now, unless he has some peculiar privilege to set aside. But the best answer to all these most atrocious calumniators, and to the vile hypocrites, who pretend to believe them is his own conduct with regard to me since 1822. About 1823 or 1824 I think it was, *there was a subscription proposed to raise a sum of money to defray the expence of an election to put me into parliament* * This was talked of most in Norfolk. Upon that occasion he wrote to Richard Gurney to say that he would subscribe five hundred pounds towards the fund, and that he did not care who knew it. This was told me by Mr. Withers of Holt, and by Mr. Spalding of Stoke Holy Cross. I have mentioned the thing before in print, and it has never been contradicted by him or by any body else. In 1826, when the election for Preston was coming on, and when a subscription was again proposed for that purpose, he offered again to subscribe, and by letter to Colonel Johnstone, who was then a member of parliament. Just before Sir Thomas Bower and I set off for Preston, Colonel Johnstone left us at a house, somewhere about Dover Street, I think it was, while he went to ask the baronet the amount of the sum that he intended to subscribe, because upon that depended

* When we come to this period, we shall find that it was Cobbett himself who proposed the subscription.

the scale of our operations, Colonel Johnstone brought us back word that he would subscribe, but that he did not name the sum, but told us distinctly that he had told him he would subscribe towards that election. He did not do it, it is true, but this does not at all mend the matter with regard to him, nor make it worse with regard to me, for here was a second declaration that he was ready to subscribe to put me into the House of Commons, where I now am without any subscription at all.* So that here he is caught, somehow or the other in the dilemma, either he did not think me a dishonest man, or he was ready to give his money to put a dishonest man into parliament. It was the former. I do not wish to blacken him so much as to inculcate the belief that it was the latter. When he acted hostile (query, *hostilely*) to me, it was from anger, and unjust anger too, for he should have reflected, that if I were going too far, the fault was his and not mine. Before I dismiss this proposition, I must observe, that though the subscription for the election for Preston amounted, I believe, to more than seventeen hundred pounds, I did not escape quite clear out of that, and if I add this to the other sums of hard money, which I have expended really and truly in the cause of parliamentary reform, and if the public acknowledge any debts on that score, I have expended out of my own earnings more than all I have received, the two thousand pounds of Burdett included."

This then is Cobbett's own defence of a transaction, which by many has been thought to sully his integrity, and by all his enemies quoted in support of their assertions that he was a lover of gold, the mammon worshipper under the patriot's mask. The controversies between Cobbett and Sir Francis Burdett must be familiar to all the readers of his Register, and although the former certainly had the advantage in point of low scurrility and abuse, yet the latter eventually succeeded in fixing the stigma of ingratitude deeply on the character of his opponent.

* It must be remarked, that this defence of Cobbett was published in his Register for October 1832, but being applicable to the charges brought against him, in 1819—20, it is here inserted.

CHAPTER V.

WE are now about to enter on a most momentous epoch in the life of Cobbett, when his character for integrity, consistency, and truth received a blow from which it never recovered, and which, if inflicted on any other man than Cobbett, would have forced him to retire from the walks of public life. It may be remembered at the time of Cobbett's incarceration in Newgate, that a charge was brought against him of having offered to government to discontinue his Register, provided he was not called up for judgment. This he most positively denied to be the fact; that he had never made any such offer to government; that he had never attempted to compromise his principles at the expense of his being held harmless from the payment of the fine inflicted upon him, and that in fact, the whole statement was a fabrication of his enemies, for which they had no substantial ground. On the expiration of his imprisonment, the charges were repeated against him at the dinner which was given in celebration of his release from Newgate, and he again stoutly and unequivocally denied that there was the slightest foundation for the report. A few weeks after the return of Cobbett from America, an action was brought by Mr. Wright against Mr. Clement as the publisher of Cobbett's Register, for a series of libels against him, and shortly after the termination of the trial, Mr. Wright published an account of the trial, in which he gives a full and authenticated statement of Cobbett's offer to suppress his Register, if he were permitted to escape the punishment which hung over his head. We need not recapitulate that part of the history which has been sufficiently enlarged upon in our account of the dinner which was given to celebrate the release of Cobbett. Two letters, however, appeared in the

Times newspaper, one of which was dated two days after the dinner, in which the writer accuses Cobbett of being guilty of a direct falsehood. "I charge him," said the writer, "with having made an offer to government to give up the Register, if they would give up the punishment. I charge Mr. Cobbett, that through Mr. Reeves of the Alien office, he made the base proposal attributed to him. This is the fact, which we heard him basely deny, and it was his falsehood which rescued him from the disgrace of being hissed out from amongst us." The writer then goes on to state, that when Cobbett's proposal was made of relinquishing his Register, a member of administration said, "Why here's Cobbett squeaking; he'll give up the Register, if you wont send him to Newgate." It was then suggested that this hardy patriot might, to save himself from so terrible a calamity, "go a little" (and by the way but a very little) farther and be induced, to save himself, to write *for* government.

Such is the substance of the two letters, which appeared in the Times. Of the second letter, Mr. Cobbett took no notice, but in November 1816, shortly after his first Two-penny Register appeared, the editor of the Times renewed the accusation, and by way of reply to this accusation, Mr. Cobbett in his Register of the 4th of January 1817, published the following article :

"Walter says that I made a proposition to the government to this effect, that if the proceedings were dropped, that is to say, that if I were not brought up for judgment, but suffered to remain unmolested; I never would publish another Register, or any other thing. *The charge is basely false. No proposition of any sort was ever made by me, or by my authority, to the government.* The grounds of the charge were as follows: A few days before I was brought up for judgment, I went home to spend the remaining short space of personal freedom with my family. The public will easily believe that the apprehension of an absence of years, and a great chance of loss of health, if not of life in a prison, produced nothing like laughter at Botley. It was at this crisis, no matter by

what feeling actuated, I wrote to my attorney, Mr. White, in Essex-street, *to make the proposition stated above*. But fits of fear and despair have never been of long duration in my family. The letter was hardly got to the post office at Southampton, before the courage of my wife and daughter returned. Indignation and resentment took place of grief and alarm, and they cheerfully consented to my stopping the letter. Mr. P. Finnerty was at my house at the time; a post chaise was got, and he *came off* (query, went) to London during the night, and prevented Mr. Wright from acting on the letter. Now Mr. Finnerty, whom I have not had the pleasure to see for some years, is alive and in London. Mr. White is also alive. The public will be sure that I would not dare to have made the above statement, if it had not been *true to the very letter*. If I am asked, how it happened that Walter came in possession of the fact of my having written to Mr. White the letter, which was recalled by Mr. Finnerty, I answer, that I cannot tell, but that I suspect it was communicated to him, (with the suppression of the recalling) by a wretch, whom he knows to be without an equal in the annals of infamy, not excepting the renowned Jonathan Wild, and whom I will, when I have time, drag forth, and hold up to the horror of mankind."

The foregoing statement on the part of Cobbett, appears at first sight to be very plausible, admitting that, actuated upon by the fears and alarms of his family, he did actually make the proposition of discontinuing his Register, but that the letter containing such proposition was suppressed by the individual to whom it was addressed, before he had time to make any communication to government on the subject. But in what light will the character of Cobbett appear for veracity or honour, when it will be seen, that although he might have written to Mr. White, authorizing him to make the proposal, which was subsequently suppressed by Mr. Finnerty, yet that he at the same time had written to another person, Mr. Reeves of the Alien, giving him full powers to treat with the government for the discontinuance of the Register, on condi-

tion that he should not be brought up for judgment for the libel of which he had been convicted. The proofs and documents establishing that important fact are too authentic and genuine, to doubt for a moment that the proposition was actually made to government, and were those proofs not all sufficient to carry conviction to the most dubious mind, the circumstance, as we shall hereafter show, of Mr. Reeves being called as a witness on the trial of Wright v. Cobbett, and there on his oath declaring that he did make such a proposal to government at the express desire and by the authority of Cobbett himself, places the matter beyond any further dispute.

The individual, whom Mr. Cobbett designates as the greatest wretch in the annals of infamy, is Mr. Wright himself, and certainly, it cannot be expected that Mr. Cobbett would speak well of an individual, who had been the instrument of exposing one of the most unprincipled and dishonourable acts of his life; and attaching a stigma to his character, which clung to it for the remainder of his existence.

The following is the version which Mr. Wright gives of this singular transaction :

“ On the 15th July 1810, Mr. Cobbett received judgment *for the libel*. Terrified at the idea of being sent to prison, he forthwith (being then in London, *without imparting his intention to his family*, who were at Botley, or to myself, who then superintended his Register, made a proposition to government, through the medium of John Reeves, Esq. to discontinue the Register, provided he was not brought up for judgment. *This proposition was made on Wednesday 20th June.* On Thursday the 21st. (a memorable day, the day on which parliament was prorogued and Sir Francis Burdett liberated from the Tower) I was first informed by Dr. Mitford of Reading that Mr. Cobbett had opened a negotiation with the government, for the purpose above mentioned. Horror-struck at the folly, to say nothing worse of his conduct, I begged of him to abandon a step so fatal to his interest

and reputation. Mr. Cobbett was deaf to my entreaties, and on Saturday the 23rd June he left for Botley, where he was to send up to Mr. Reeves for the consideration of government, a statement of his claims to indulgence, and also a copy of his Farewell Address to the public on dropping the Register.

"On Monday the 25th June, Mr. Cobbett writes to me from Botley thus, 'To-morrow I shall send to Mr. Reeves, not only my statement of claims to indulgence, but also my farewell article, which, when he has shown it, he will hand to you. Proceed at once with the index &c. &c. for this is to be the last number. I found all at home pretty well. God bless you.'

"On Tuesday, the 26th June, he writes thus, 'I now enclose you all that part of my article, which will touch upon the dropping of the Register. I wrote to Reeves to-day with a copy of my article. I hope it may succeed, and so does Mr. Hallett, who has just been here, and *who quite approves of what I am doing*. He says, that he had told Mrs. Hallett it must be so.'

"On Wednesday, the 27th June, Mr. Reeves wrote the following letter to Mr. Cobbett:

'Dear Sir,

'Wednesday, June 27th, 1810.

'I have your letter with the enclosure, and I have left them both in the hands of Mr. Yorke. He will see what can be done on the subject with Mr. Perceval.

'If the government should feel themselves so circumstanced that they cannot hold their hand, but must direct the Attorney-general to proceed according to his notice on Thursday, you will still have the benefit of your measure in the eyes of the court. No doubt they will take such a sacrifice into consideration, and it is in their power also to postpone their judgment till Michaelmas Term. There are, therefore, two chances, one with the government, the other with the court, and both grounded on the same principle. I hope one may take place, if the other does not.

‘ You shall hear from me again to-morrow. I go on Friday or Saturday to Oxford, and shall be there all the following week. So I shall be out of the way of negotiation soon.

‘ Believe me, dear Sir,

‘ Yours ever most truly,

‘ To Wm. Cobbett Esq.

‘ JOHN REEVES.’

“ A rumour that Mr. Cobbett, prierously to his leaving town had made the above-mentioned offer, had now got wind. The government appear to have treated the offer with the contempt which it deserved. The first law officer of the crown was reported to have said in the court of King’s Bench, to some of the gentlemen of the bar behind him, ‘ That—— Cobbett has offered to give up his Register, provided we do not call him up for judgment.’ Most of Mr. Cobbett’s friends came flocking to me to know whether there was any foundation for the rumour, and among others, I well remember the venerable Major Cartwright paid me a visit, and appeared greatly shocked that ‘ the cause’ was about to lose so powerful a supporter. Being thus harrassed on the one side by the entreaties of his friends, and on the other by the taunts and sarcasms of his enemies, I came to the resolution of making an effort to save Mr. Cobbett from the disgrace and ruin that were about to fall upon him. I therefore late in the afternoon of Wednesday the 27th, waited on Mr. Reeves at his then residence in Duke-street, Westminster, and intreated him to tell me, whether or no Mr. Cobbett was to be called up for judgment, at the same time saying with some warmth, that unless I received a positive assurance, that the proceedings against him would be dropped, I would not discontinue the Register. Mr. Reeves told me that Mr. Cobbett’s proposition to government had been forwarded through Mr. Yorke to Mr. Perceval, but that no answer had yet been received. He said, he would step across the park to the Admiralty where Mr. Yorke, who was then first lord, resided, and see whether any thing had been determined upon. He went accordingly, and on his return, finding his answer to be any

thing but satisfactory, I went home, and as it was too late for the post, I made up a mail coach parcel; acquainted Mr. Cobbett, with what I had done, and implored him not to sacrifice character and fame and fortune, without the probability of securing freedom in return."

"Now follows Mr. Cobbett's letter of Thursday the 28th June, in answer to the few hasty lines which I sent him in the mail coach parcel.

"I got your coach letter, and also that of Mr. Reeves, which I enclose for your perusal. No, I will not sacrifice fortune without securing freedom in return, this I am resolved on. It would be both baseness and folly. Your threat to Reeves was good, and spoke my sentiment exactly. I have not time for telling you my plan now, but let it suffice, that really from the bottom of my soul, I would rather be called up than put down the Register. Now, therefore, unless before you get this, you know for a certainty that I am not to be called up, suppress the article sent you, stuff in something just to fill up one sheet, and put the little notice I now send at the head of that sheet. Leave me to manage the rest. In a conversation with any one, say, you do not know what I intend to do; that it will depend upon circumstances, and the like. Never fear, do thus, and all will be well. God bless you."

"I now come to the part in which Mr. Finnerty is introduced. On Friday the 29th of June, Mr. Cobbett writes to me thus, 'If you have received my letter of yesterday, you will of course have altered the publication, you will have cancelled my abandoning article, and have put in the notice. It is from fear that my letter may have miscarried, that I now send off Mr. Finnerty express to acquaint you with the purport of it. Lest any accident should have taken you out of the way, I give Mr. Finnerty a note to Mr. Hansard, and one to Mr. Bagshaw."

"Such is the plain unadorned history of Mr. Cobbett's negotiation with government, a negotiation which he has solemnly assured the public never took place. I will here introduce the names of sundry persons, who, if necessary, can

establish in a court of justice the facts I have stated, and will do it à la Cobbett. To begin then, there is Mr. Reeves,* there is Mr. Charles Yorke, there is Dr. Mitford, there is Mr. Hansard, there are his account books to prove that Mr. Cobbett paid him for printing the abandoning article, there are George Cross and Louis Liber, two of his apprentices, who set up the type, there are Mr. Cobbett's own letters, there is Mr. Reeves' letter, there is Mr. Hallett, who actually told Mrs. Hallett it must be so, and lastly, there is the abandoning article itself, which was on the eve of being worked off at the press."

The summary of that article has been already given in a former part of this work and after the full and explicit statement which Mr. Wright sent forth of the attempt of Cobbett to negotiate with government for the suppression of his Register, words are inadequate to describe the astonishment which must pervade every mind, at the unparalleled boldness, mingled with an equal proportion of the most brazen impudence, which could have carried Cobbett through the scene at the Crown and Anchor, where in the face of his friends and the whole public, he denied in the most unqualified terms that any such negotiation was ever entered into. His statement also about his extreme sensitiveness respecting his feelings so strongly excited by the fears and tears of his wife and children, as to induce him under their immediate influence to write to Mr. White, the solicitor of Essex-street, proposing the suppression of the Register, turns out to be sheer humbug, when we find that previously to his going to Botley, and *before* his feelings had been so acutely worked upon by the distress of his family at their approaching separation, he had actually unknown to any of them made the proposition to government *through* the medium of Mr. John Reeves. His statement also about despatching Mr. Finnerty express to Mr. White *restricting* that gentleman from making the proposal to govern-

* In justice to the character of the late Mr. Perceval, it is right to state, that he addressed a letter to Mr. Reeves in which Mr. Cobbett's offer was treated by him with the scorn which it so richly merited.

ment, is also based on falsehood, for at that very time, the negotiation was going on between Mr. Reeves and Mr. Yorke, and according to Mr. Cobbett's own letter to Mr. Wright, as inserted above, his real motive for despatching Mr. Finerty express, was not to Mr. White, but to Mr. Wright, for fear he had not cancelled the abandoning article, or altered the publication of the Register.

With all the admiration which we entertain for the intellectual powers of Mr. Cobbett, we cannot consistently with our professed spirit of impartiality, avert our view from those actions of his life, which had a direct influence upon the estimation in which he was to be held by the present generation, and of the character of him which was to be transmitted to posterity. From the time that Mr. Wright's statement was published, accompanied by such unequivocal proofs of its veracity, the character of Cobbett fell in the public opinion; his friends saw that he was the advocate of the great political questions which he supported, no longer than his own interest demanded it, and that he was in fact ready and disposed to sell himself, whenever that interest could be more securely promoted. His enemies had him now in their power, and as it may be naturally supposed, they did not spare the lash with which they so unmercifully thrashed him. In the midst of all the abuse, however, which was poured out against him, Cobbett stood with a brazen front, and lashed his enemies in return. He appeared, like Achilles, invulnerable to all the shafts which were levelled against him, some of which were shot with a fierceness which would have made any other person quail with terror. He appeared the very rhinoceros of the human race, the balls rebounded from him, and not seldom in the very faces of those who shot them. He was truth itself, and truth was in him; whilst on the other hand, his enemies were a herd of base, degraded, d—d calumniators and traducers; monsters, whom he would hold up to the horror of mankind, and who were instigated to their attack upon him by their envy of his transcendent talents, and of that fame which, to use his own hyperbolic

mode of expression, had spread itself to all the four quarters of the globe, and by which he had earned for himself **THE GLORIOUS TITLE OF THE GREAT ENLIGHTENER OF THE HUMAN RACE.**

The life of Cobbett, on the whole, presents a singular picture of the way in which great talents have been counteracted and rendered of comparatively little value, by a devouring egotism. In his times Cobbett advocated so many opposite opinions, that his assistance has done little for any of them. Whatever side he espoused, he was equally violent and inveterate against his adversaries for the time being. All security in his constancy or consistency was out of the question. He would write for one side just as long as he thought he was looked up to as the greatest man amongst his party, but no sooner did he find out that others were preferred to himself, that any other notions were entertained than his own, that all would not join in attacking what he attacked, and admiring what he admired, than he turned fiercely round, flew off to the other side, and called all those who had the presumption to retain his cast off opinions fools and knaves. No political event happened in England but which he thought he had a hand in producing, or which was not foretold by him. It was he alone who made the people sensible they were oppressed; against him alone was the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act directed, and on account of which it was necessary for him to fly to America, and there with his "long arm," reaching across the Atlantic, in his opinion he caused Sir Francis Burdett to be almost rejected by the electors of Westminster.

CHAPTER VI.

THE situation of the country at the commencement of 1820, was more tranquil than the violent popular agitation of the preceding months could have given reason to expect. That agitation, though it had produced little actual mischief, had been in a high degree appalling. We were regarded by foreign nations as on the eve of a revolution, and even the wise and experienced amongst our own nation, were not without apprehension with respect to the possible result. The tumult was now hushed, and in a country like England, external tranquillity is a decisive proof, whatever discontent may exist, of the absence of any intention of breaking out into open violations of the law.

This change must in part be ascribed to the rigorous measures pursued by government, and in part to the natural course of events. The manufacturing population had been deluded into a line of conduct inconsistent with civil order; all their passions had been excited; all their wildest prejudices and caprices had been flattered, and they had been taught that they might, by their violent proceedings, regulate the course of public events. They had followed to a certain point, those who had presented themselves as leaders. The Manchester meeting was part of a system, which had been for years advancing to maturity, and of which we afterwards witnessed, in organized assassination and rebellion. Seditious writers led the way, seditious speakers followed, and the common aim of both was to inflame the multitude, to intimidate the government, and thus to pave the way to a sanguinary and terrible revolution, under the specious pretence of reform. We do not mean to impute that the aim of either Cobbett or Hunt was actually to bring about a revolution,

but no doubt can exist, that both of those celebrated reformers had got themselves entangled with a set of men, such as those who constituted the Cato-street gang, whose sole aim was to raise themselves, if possible, upon the ruin of their country. Plunder was the cry of these infatuated men, and although we cannot openly accuse either Cobbett or Hunt of being desirous to bring about the fatal consequences of a revolution, yet it is certain that they instigated measures eminently calculated to produce such a result.

The circumstances which had transpired in the action which Mr. Wright had brought against Clement, had given an almost irrecoverable blow to the reputation of Cobbett, and it was now destined to undergo a further exposure, in two actions which were brought against him for libels, one by a person of the name of Cleary, and the other by Mr. Wright, the same plaintiff in the action against Mr. Clement. In the former action a most singular occurrence took place, which was nothing less than Mr. Cobbett, who was to defend his own cause; being taken by the collar of his coat by the door-keeper and actually thrust out of the court.

When the cause was called on, Mr. Brougham, who was for the plaintiff, said that the action was for a certain libel, written by the defendant, imputing that he (Mr. Cleary) had forged a certain letter. A gentleman of the name of Wright had also brought an action against Mr. Cobbett for an imputation contained in the same libel, to wit, that he (Mr. Wright) had uttered the letter forged by Mr. Cleary, knowing that letter to be a forgery. In the case of Mr. Cleary, which was a common jury cause, the defendant had pleaded the general issue; in the case of Mr. Wright, however, which was a special jury cause, a justification was pleaded, and Mr. Brougham therefore now prayed that Cleary's action might stand over, until the cause of Wright and Cobbett should be decided. Mr. Cobbett not being present, the application of Mr. Brougham was not granted. The cause was again called on at the close of the sittings of the court, and the defendant still not being present, the Lord Chief Justice consented that

the case should be postponed until after the trial of *Wright v. Cobbett*, unless good cause were shown to the contrary. As the court were about to rise, Mr. Cobbett made his appearance, and addressing himself to the Lord Chief Justice intimated, that he understood that his case had been put off. The Lord Chief Justice replied, "Yes, because you were not here when it was called."

"My lord," said Cobbett, "I attended in this court all day on Friday, and all day on Saturday. This morning at half past ten o'clock, I was entering the court when the door-keeper seized me by the collar and thrust me out. I said that I was a defendant, but that did not avail me, and as I did not wish to disturb the proceedings of the court, I submitted. During the day I have been at the tavern hard by, with my sons to and fro bringing me information. At last I heard that Mr. Brougham had made a motion to postpone the cause, but that your lordship had not acceded to it, but when I now come into court, I hear that the trial is put off. This will be a great injury to me my lord. I am brought here by a fiat granted by the court." The Lord Chief Justice asked Mr. Cobbett, what he meant by a fiat? "I mean a warrant," said Mr. Cobbett, "and I trust your lordship will do me justice." The Lord Chief Justice desired that the door-keeper who had excluded Mr. Cobbett might be called. On the officer being questioned he admitted that he had turned the defendant out about half past ten in the morning. The Lord Chief Justice then thought that under those circumstances, he could not delay the trial of the cause. Mr. Brougham then said that he would renew his application on its own merits, because in case the justification in *Wright v. Cobbett* was made out, the case of *Cleary v. Cobbett* need not be tried. The Lord Chief Justice asked Mr. Cobbett, if he consented. "No!" replied Mr. Cobbett, in a tone that made some of the barristers start upon their seats. "The learned counsel's statements proceed from his not having read his brief." "Under favour," said Mr. Brougham, "I believe I have read my brief." The Lord Chief Justice said that he could not put off the trial without the consent of Mr.

Cobbett, and as that cannot be obtained, the cause of Cleary v. Cobbett must stand the first for the following day.

It would occupy too much space to give the whole of the trial, we shall, therefore, confine ourselves to the facts from which the libel originated, and which was considered as of so injurious a nature to the plaintiff's character, that he estimated his damages at £3000.

Cleary was an *attaché* of Major Cartwright, who had taken a prominent part in an election for Westminster, while Cobbett was out of the country, and having obtained possession of a letter written by Cobbett to Mr. James Wright, containing certain reflections upon the character of Mr. Hunt (one of the candidates to whom Cleary was opposed), he read it publicly on the hustings. Cobbett then, notwithstanding his having written the letter, published in his Register of the 5th September 1818, a certain libel upon the plaintiff, intimating that the letter which the plaintiff had read as his (Cobbett's) letter, had not been written by him, but that it was in truth a forgery, and that the plaintiff had been concerned in forging it. There were other counts for general aspersion of the plaintiff's character, and the damages were laid at £3000. Witnesses were called to prove the facts of the case, and among them Mr. James Wright, the defendant's former partner, and Mr. William Adams, a currier in Westminster, and an active member of the once famous committee of that city. Cobbett's cross-examination of the latter gentleman, as to the circumstances of what was called the rump committee, was marked by his characteristic talent, and long formed a favourite subject for his political opponents. The following may be taken as a specimen of his style. Alluding to the plaintiff Cleary, he said, "The learned counsel had said that his client, was so much agitated by the alleged libels, that they were but too likely to interfere with his capabilities to become a practical barrister, to which object his present studies were directed. Now, considering the scarcity of the gentlemen of the bar, and the difficulty of procuring a barrister for love or money, (Cobbett here gave a significant

look at the benches, which were crowded with barristers, and which occasioned a hearty laugh in the court) he must say that he should feel seriously responsible, if he had the misfortune to occasion a deduction from that learned profession of such an eminent personage as Mr. T. Cleary. It was held a crime, even by poachers, to crush a bird in the egg, but how deeply criminal must it be, if he happened to crush a lawyer in the egg, (this remark excited the risibility even of the judges, and it was some time before the laughter subsided.) He should be really sorry to commit such a crime, although so frequently and so severely provoked by Mr. Cleary. For this person had published several libels upon him before his return from America, in the composition of which libels, his faithful agent, Mr. Jackson refused to say that he did not assist. Cleary indeed boasted, that he had four times killed him (Mr. Cobbett) with his pen while in America, and the first communication he received from that literary warrior upon his return to England, was a challenge to fight a duel, threatening him with a stamp of cowardice if he refused to attend to the challenge, but complacently adding, that if he himself were too old to meet the challenger, that challenger would meet his eldest son, for whom he professed a great regard."

At the close of his speech, Cobbett said, talk of carrying war into the bosom of families, could any act like this be ascribed to William Cobbett in the long course of his public life? And he, the mild Mr. Cleary, came to be protected against the furious William Cobbett. Feebleness was often mistaken for mildness, but they should recollect that the feeblest animals were often the most malicious, reptiles were more mischievous than animals. He begged the jury to look at the whole transaction honestly from the beginning to the end, that they would not be made the instruments of robbing him and his family of the little they possessed, though he would rather work to get it, or apply to his friends, than knuckle to the learned gentleman or his client. He begged they would not give their sanction to the basest treachery ever known.

He begged them to think once again of the witnesses before their decision, afterwards they would, no doubt, be glad to forget them for ever. He begged them to mark for reprobation this abominable *espionage*, this spy system, to show the natural abhorrence of Englishmen at what was base, and let their decision stamp the infamy of those who had been guilty of such a breach of private confidence.

The Lord Chief Justice summed up, not without some tincture of partiality towards the plaintiff. The Jury, however, did not estimate the character of Cleary very highly, for after deliberating about three quarters of an hour, they returned a verdict for the plaintiff of 40 shillings damages.

As this trial terminated with merely nominal damages, it might have been supposed that some others who were ready to pounce upon Mr. Cobbett, would have been discouraged from prosecuting any further suit against him, but in this Cobbett himself was mistaken, for on the 11th December, the trial of Wright against Cobbett came on in the same court for a second charge of libel, in which, in reality, the same parties were concerned who constituted the plaintiffs in the former action.

On the case being called on, Mr. Cobbett rose and intimated to the court that he intended to withdraw his plea of justification.

Mr. Chitty then opened the pleadings. The ibels charged were three in number, and consisted of certain paragraphs published in the Political Register of the 4th January, 1817, 9th March 1819, and the 6th January 1820. These paragraphs severally charged the plaintiff, Mr. Wright, with forgery and fraud, and describing him as an individual to be held up to the horror and detestation of mankind.

Mr. Scarlett, in opening the case, stated, that the plaintiff, Mr. Wright, of whom, excepting professionally, he knew nothing, had been introduced and recommended to him by persons of the highest rank and of the most illustrious honour. He was, therefore, justified in saying that he was a man respected and entrusted by those persons, whose confidence and

respect gave weight to a man's character, and that neither fraud nor falsehood had ever been imputed to him, except by the defendant, upon the record before the court. Mr. Wright was known to the world as the editor of the Parliamentary History, the Parliamentary Debates, and other works of great utility and learning. Those works, which had been originally introduced to the public under the shelter of Mr. Cobbett's name, having been conducted, in fact, entirely by the plaintiff. To introduce the defendant to the jury would scarcely be necessary. During many years no person had been more the object of public notice than Mr. Cobbett. By his writings, that individual had made himself known in every part of the globe where the English language was spoken or known, and far was he (Mr. S.) from wishing to insinuate against a man of undoubted talent, more than his duty to the plaintiff actually demanded. This he would say, that he possessed such talents for writing as during a long term of years had been unparalleled in the history of the literature of this country; powers which, whether employed for a good or a bad purpose, and frequently they were employed for purposes apparently inconsistent with each other, always enabled him to handle his subject with force of argument, and dexterity of expression, perhaps in a more eminent degree than any writer ever known. Mr. Cobbett possessed great power over the minds of the lower orders, and he was indebted principally for that power to the knack which he had of mixing up in his compositions coarseness, occasionally with feeling and truth, sometimes with the peculiar expression which the occasion might demand. Need he (Mr. S.) remind the jury in how perilous a situation that individual was placed who became the subject of attack by such a writer? Need he say that it required no mean degree of courage to call even at the bar of an English jury for justice on such an opponent? The connexion between Mr. Wright and Mr. Cobbett commenced, when no man need to be ashamed of Mr. Cobbett's acquaintance. It arose out of a change of books; Mr. Wright being a bookseller, and the first trans-

action to which he should advert was the loan of £20 by the plaintiff to the defendant, when the latter arrived from America. One of the first acts which Cobbett performed on his commencing the bookselling business in Pall Mall was to publish a life of Paine, for the express purpose of holding that individual up to the execration of mankind, and it was subsequent to the publication of that work *for the benefit of the people of England*,* that the self-designated enlightener of the people, for so Mr Cobbett thought fit to term himself, had commenced his Political Register, and about that time, a connexion was formed between the plaintiff, the defendant, and a gentleman of the name of Howell, for the publication of the Parliamentary Debates, the State Trials, and the Parliamentary History. This went on until Mr. Cobbett, on taking a trip to Southampton, was seized with the desire to become a land speculator, and during his absence from town Mr. Wright inspected and corrected the Register. By aid of the paper system, which Cobbett was then writing down, he got accommodation to the amount of between 60 and 70,000*l*, and these discounts were principally effected, one bill being given as another became due, through the medium of Mr. Wright in London. One transaction begot another, and a great deal of money passed through Mr. Wright's hands. Wright in fact became the publisher of the Register, for he received the proceeds and paid the outgoings, and remitted cash at times to Mr. Cobbett at Botley between the years 1805, and 1810—1811. The accounts, as would commonly be

* We cannot refrain making an extract from that work, as exhibiting the astonishing change which must have taken place in the opinion of Cobbett, when on exposing the bones of Paine, he called him "the ennobled of nature." "How Tom lives, or what brothel he inhabits, I know not, nor does it much signify; and whether his carcass is at last to be suffered to rot in the earth, or to be dried in the air, is of very little consequence. Whenever, or wherever he breathes his last, he will excite neither sorrow nor compassion, no friendly hand will close his eyes, not a groan will be uttered, not a tear will be shed. Like Judas he will be remembered by posterity, men will learn to express all that is base, malignant, treacherous, unnatural, and blasphemous, by the single monosyllable—Paine." And yet a few straggling hairs of this monster were afterwards worth one guinea!!!

found the case, when accommodation paper was employed became extremely intricate between Mr. Wright and Mr. Cobbett, and, in short, they were in such a state, that to use the very forcible language employed by the defendant himself, when a partner in the business was proposed "They were in such a state that the devil himself could not unravel them." Things were in this situation, when Mr. Cobbett was called upon to defend himself against the charge of libel, and upon that charge was convicted. Upon that conviction the question arose as to what steps should be taken to avert the impending calamity of judgment, and those measures led to the first of the libels for which Mr. Cobbett was now to be tried. *Mr. Cobbett proposed a gentleman*, who was to be called as a witness to make a bargain for him with government, that he should not be called up for judgment, and upon that condition he would give up his Register. The negotiation did not succeed. Mr. Cobbett appeared to receive judgment and was thrown into prison. The plaintiff then applied for a settlement of his accounts, when to his utter astonishment, Mr. Cobbett answered that he had no accounts, nor any letters, and put Mr. Wright to the proof of every sixpence, which in the course of his long agency, he had distributed or received. An accountant was employed to collect the various documents and they were submitted to Mr. Cobbett for inspection. Mr. Cobbett, admitted nothing; disputed every thing, called upon him to produce vouchers, even for sums of money paid to himself, and finally refused to allow him any thing for agency. The disputed accounts were arranged by the award of Mr. William Cook. Mr. Cobbett claimed about £12,000 and received about £6,000, and the effect of this curtailment of his claim was an inveterate hostility conceived against Mr. Wright. Before Mr. Cobbett went to prison, a publication took place in the Times newspaper, hinting that Mr. Cobbett had been disposed to abandon his Register, on which Mr. Cobbett wrote an article to refute this imputation, and called it "A Year's New Gift to old George Rose." Now the first of the

libels rose out of a suspicion that it was by Mr. Wright, that the fact had been communicated to the Times, and in expressing his opinion that such had been the course of communication, Cobbett spoke of Mr. Wright as a wretch unequalled in the annals of infamy, and whom he would hold up to the horror of mankind.

Mr. Scarlett then proceeded to advert to the second libel upon the record, which originated out of the conduct of Mr. Cleary, in reading at the Westminster election in 1818, Mr. Cobbett's letter of 1808, in which he spoke of Mr. Hunt with feelings very different from those which he subsequently expressed towards that gentleman. That letter Mr. Cobbett, who did not disdain occasionally to employ a falsehood when he found it impossible by argument to overcome his adversary, treated as forged, and as the work of a man who had forged his (Cobbett's) name upon several occasions. Mr. Cobbett in his plea upon the record, had pledged himself to prove these assertions to be true. The paragraph in which he described the big drop of sweat, Mr. Scarlett read to the jury.

" You, my dear sir, know the history of this Wright; you know all his tricks, all his attempts, the public do not, and I will not now trouble the public with a detail, which, if put in a suitable form, would make a romance in the words of truth, far surpassing any thing that was ever imagined of moral turpitude. I will execute this task one day or other. If the caitiff should put forth any thing by way of palliation in the meantime, there is Mr. Walker, there is Mr. Margrave, there is my attorney, there is Mr. Swann, there is Sir Francis Burdett himself; there is my son John, who though he was then a child, will never forget the big round drops of sweat that in a cold winter's day rolled down the caitiff's forehead when he was detected in fabricating accounts, and when I took Johnny by the hand, who had begun whimpering for poor Wright, and said, ' Look at that man, my dear, those drops of sweat are the effect of detected dishonesty. Think of that, my dear child, and you will always be an honest

man.' Mr. Peter Walker and Mr. Swann were present at this scene, which took place in my room in Newgate in 1811."

The contents of this paragraph, Mr. Cobbett undertook to prove the truth of, and although all the parties were in court, Mr. Cobbett did not call one of them.

The printing of the libels in question was proved by Mr. Hay, and the publication of the Register was proved by Mr. Dolby. Mr. W. Jackson proved that he published the Political Register at the time when Mr. William Cobbett, Jun., arrived from America in January 1819. He then resigned the publication to William, the son, in consequence of a letter received from the father.

Mr. John Reeves proved that he knew Mr. Cobbett in the year 1810 and 1811, and that he had been convicted of libel. AT THE TIME OF THAT CONVICTION, HE HAD A COMMUNICATION WITH MR. COBBETT, BEFORE HE LEFT TOWN TO JOIN HIS FAMILY; IN CONSEQUENCE OF WHICH HE MADE A PROPOSAL TO MR. YORKE, AND THROUGH THAT GENTLEMAN TO MR. PERCEVAL, THAT MR. COBBETT WOULD ABANDON HIS REGISTER, ON CONDITION OF NOT BEING CALLED UP FOR JUDGMENT. Mr. Reeves could not recollect whether he had seen Mr. Perceval on the subject,* and he had no recollection of ever seeing Mr. Wright after that period. Several letters were produced, which Mr. Reeves believed to be in the hand-writing of Mr. Cobbett.

Mr. Cobbett examined Mr. Reeves, with the intent of affixing the writing of those letters upon his son William, but Mr. Reeves positively swore to the hand writing being that of Mr. Cobbett, as he said, that he knew it, it being a very particular hand, on the contrary, he had no recollection of having seen the hand writing of his son William in his life. The letter of Mr. Reeves to Mr. Cobbett dated June 27th, 1810, was produced and read,† as were also the letters

* We have already stated, that Mr. Perceval wrote to Mr. Reeves on the subject.

† This letter has been already given.

of Mr. Cobbett to Mr. Wright, stating that he would send his proposition to Mr. Reeves, as well as his farewell article.

The case for the prosecution being closed, Mr. Cobbett entered upon his defence, and in explanation of the charge of his having borrowed £20 of Mr. Wright, he accounted for it in the following manner. When he was in America previous to the year 1800 he gave a commission to a friend to send him some books, who fixed upon this Mr. Wright. Mr. Wright sent out the books with the invoice of them, and the money was punctually paid to him. Their acquaintance, therefore, did not commence, as was stated by the learned counsel, by Mr. Wright lending him £20, but, by his being an excellent customer to Mr. Wright. The fact as to the £20 was this. He did not come from America without money or resources, but having stopped at Halifax in Nova Scotia longer than he intended, he became short of money; he drew upon Mr. Wright for £20 sending him at the same time a draft, which he had no doubt was paid 24 hours after his arrival in London. Shortly after their acquaintance commenced, Wright fell into difficulties, failed in his trade, and in the year 1803 or 1804, was confined in the King's Bench Prison. Whenever the transactions between them come to be brought fully before the public, as he was resolved they should in all their details, the world would be able to judge how far Mr. Scarlett was justified in asserting, he hoped by instruction and not voluntarily, that their connexion began by Wright's lending him £20. It was stated by Mr. Scarlett that his acquaintance with Mr. Wright commenced at the time he was writing against Paine, and that when he began to write, the connexion ceased.

Mr. Scarlett here made the severe remark, that he did not wish to be misrepresented. *He had never distinguished any period of Mr. Cobbett's life, in which he did not write libels.*

On this Mr. Cobbett remarked that the proverb, forbidding the cobbler to go beyond his last, might be extremely applicable as well as useful to lawyers, and if Mr. Scarlett had not gone beyond his brief, a great deal of time would have been

saved to the jury. In the prosecution of his defence, Mr. Cobbett entered into a long-rambling account of his motives for exhuming the bones of Paine, the principal of which was to show to the people of England, how completely all public spirit and all public virtue were destroyed by republican governments. In regard to the evidence of Mr. Reeves, he carefully abstained from even remotely touching upon it, thereby letting an opportunity escape him of justifying himself in the eyes of the public, for the commission of one of the most dishonourable acts in his life, and which he attempted to support by falsehood and prevarication. The chief ground of Mr. Cobbett's defence, however, was, that the action should not have been brought against him but against his sons, who were in reality the publishers of the Register, and who were in the habit of making alterations in the articles which he transmitted for publication, and that they had actually made most material alterations in the Register which contained the libels. In this statement, Cobbett was corroborated by his two sons, who deposed that several alterations were made by them in the manuscript of the Register, particularly complained of in the present trial, as they had inserted the name of Wright, which never appeared in the manuscript. They did so, because they understood that Wright had been exposing the private letters of their father, and slandering his character. Therefore, they were anxious the character of Wright should be perfectly understood.

Mr. Scarlett, in his reply, dwelt upon the unnatural and dastardly conduct of the defendant, in putting forth his "infant sons" to meet all the consequences of his own libelling, whether such libelling should lead to civil actions, the penalties, of which they could not afford to pay, or to criminal punishment, which they must be condemned to endure, but he reminded the jury that the indicting or dictating of a libel rendered the author liable, whoever the publisher might be.

The Lord Chief Justice, in his summing up, held that Mr. Cobbett, either as the bonafide proprietor, or as the editor of the Political Register, would be liable for its contents. With

respect to the alterations he had authority to make, if a principal authorized an agent to make reasonable alterations, he was still responsible. It was for the jury to decide whether the evidence had brought home to the defendant the libels in question. If they were of that opinion, the line of defence adopted by Mr. Cobbett, if not permitted to weigh in aggravation of damages, would certainly be a very sufficient bar to any plea in mitigation.

The jury, after deliberating nearly an hour and three quarters, returned with a verdict for the plaintiff, damages £1000, costs 40 shillings.

These were very inauspicious circumstances under which Cobbett was to commence his new career in England, but his mind, ever full of activity and ingenuity, devised a plan by which he could at once effect two purposes, the first to put five thousand pounds in his pocket, of the manner, however, of its appropriation, he was not to be called upon; and secondly, that with such five thousand pounds, he would be able materially and essentially to assist the cause of reform. The plan which Mr. Cobbett recommended must have been highly delightful to the imagination, on account of its patriarchal simplicity and innocence, and no doubt whatever existed, that from some singular exposures which had been lately made, touching the character of Mr. Cobbett, the subscribers to his fund would place so much confidence in his honour and integrity, as not to raise even a bubble of suspicion, that every farthing of the money so subscribed, would be religiously and punctually applied to the purpose for which it was raised.

The following is the plan, which emanated from the brain of the ingenious financier. "He proposes to raise a fund for *furthering the cause of reform in a way such as his discretion shall point out.* The sum which he thinks will be required will be five thousand pounds. This is to be collected *amongst the male and female reformers, and lodged in his hands; to be used solely by him, and without any one ever having a right to ask him, what he is going to do with it.*

People will conjecture what they please, he will only say this, that he shall never employ it for any private purpose, for the advancement of his own emolument in any shape whatever.

“ It requires only two pence each from six hundred thousand men and women, to raise the sum required, and oh ! what benefits would arise from those seemingly trifling two pences. The money that is spent by the labouring classes upon the mere foolish article of snuff in one single week, and perhaps in one single day would more than make up this sum. Only think,” says Mr. Cobbett, “ of the enormous sacrifices which I have made, and only think of the task which I am now offering to undertake. It is useless to call upon others for exertions ; to call upon others to do something, and to do great things too, unless you (the reformers) will every man of you do some little trifling thing, and what can well be more trifling *than the abstaining from the use of part of a pint of beer*. This is the way to act with effect. *One meeting of five thousand pounds will do more than five thousand meetings of fifty thousand men each*. I,” continues Mr. Cobbett, “ take it for granted *that I possess your confidence* (query) !! To blare out before hand *how I mean to employ the money*, must be to defeat the object altogether, and therefore I again repeat, *that I must answer no questions put to me upon the subject, let them come from what quarter they will*.”

Now to the mode of making the collections.

In London, or other large towns, persons who take a lead in societies, lodges, or clubs of trades, may very conveniently become the depositaries of a collection. Other persons may be chosen to receive money in the metropolis and large towns. And *these receivers, on or before the sixth of February, will be pleased to forward the amount to William Cobbett*.

“ Though ” says Mr. Cobbett, “ I have mentioned the sum of two pence, there are doubtless persons of ability, who will be ready to subscribe larger sums, and I have reason to



W. PEARSON del. et sculp.

NORMAN FARM.

London: Published by the Proprietors, by

JOHN C. BARNARD, 10, NEWBURY STREET, LONDON.

character of Cobbett, which gradually lowered him in the estimation of the people, hurt the cause he intended to serve, and through which he was borne by his unparalleled impudence, whilst persuading the people that they had the utmost confidence in him, when in reality the stock on hand was very small indeed. Mr. Cobbett imagined that he could convince the reformers that not a farthing of the fund was to be made available for any private purpose of his own, and the female reformers would have an opportunity of repaying him by their two-pences, for all those fine compliments which he had lavished upon their sense, their virtue, and beauty, and the male reformers would cheaply purchase the honour at the price of two pence, of having their names transmitted to posterity in a book at the bottom of which was to stand emblazoned the name of WILLIAM COBBETT, and its title to be "COBBETT'S FUND FOR REFORM."

A powerful writer, under the signature of Aglaus, thus speaks of this disgraceful business;

"What didst THOU think that the *most thinking* people of England had really parted with their senses; that they really could forget thy numerous apostacies, and give so substantial an evidence of folly, as to place five thousand pounds in the hands of Peter Porcupine? To be sure, the bottle conjuror first received his money and then decamped; then why not William Cobbett? Hast thou not travelled? Do we not want some bold and impudent adventurer, some strange novelty to mislead the woe-begone people? Why may not William Cobbett out Katerfelto Katerfelto? Unfortunately thy recent attempt to bamboozle Sir Francis, is still fresh upon our memory, but what signifies that? It is 'a great man,' who proposes the scheme, and another great man, the Black Dwarf himself, will support it, and who knows what may not be accomplished by the united efforts of such powerful mental energies? Therefore be not disheartened, friend Cobbett, at the burning of thy Register.* It was only amidst

* This alludes to the circumstance of Cobbett's Register being burnt at a meeting of the radicals, shortly after the exposure of the negotiation for the suppression of that work.

a little group of radicals. They were but poor men; they can only withhold their pence, whilst the opulent reformers will come forward open-handed, and give thee twice five thousand pounds by the middle of February. Keep up thy spirits then, and proceed in thy honourable undertaking, and if after all, the rogues fail to supply thee with so small a sum, why then conclude, they are not worthy of thy noble consideration, and e'en take thyself back again to Long Island. The Americans esteem and love thee, the sensible English loathe and despise thee."

Perhaps one of the most extraordinary incidents of Cobbett's life, was the celebrated hoax which was played upon him by the lady reformers of Richmond, and it is scarcely to be credited how a man, possessed of a tithe of the penetration of Cobbett, could be so completely duped. His vanity, the prevailing foible of his heart, was wonderfully tickled; and for a time, all the other energies of his mind seem to have been paralyzed, so absorbed was he in the nauseous flattery, which was so copiously administered to him. The following address, supposed to be sent him by the female reformers of Richmond, and received by him as such, contains what its authors, whether priests or laymen, meant it should contain. It contains falsehood and scandal, the traducement of worth, the vilification of virtue, and the principles of robbery and murder; all, all, under the gentle garb of radicalism and spencean philosophy. That it was complete in its purpose is palpable from its being gulped down by the devouring maw of Cobbett.

"FROM THE FEMALE REFORMERS OF RICHMOND IN SURREY, TO WILLIAM COBBETT, ESQ."

Richmond, Jan. 1820:

"From amidst parks and palaces, royal and noble, surrounded with gorgeous grandeur, yet hourly witnessing the most squalid penury, seldom and never, incapriciously mitigated by even the scraps, which, sometimes, falling from the tables of the falsely termed—great, are occasionally doled out in fits of vanity. With duchesses before our eyes, some of

£8000 per annum, others of nearly double that jointure, together with many more scarcely inferior in titles and wealth; from the daily views of such overgrown possessions, a disproportion which to us would not be more irksome, than to the general mass of the people of England, if it helped to lighten the pressure of the poor rates upon our families: from a centre of scenery of this description, we, the female reformers of Richmond, in the county of Surrey, approach the real friend of the people, with sincere congratulations upon his safe return to his native land in health and in strength, to pursue his generous career in the blessed work of virtuous reformation.

“ Though later in our address than our sisterhood in the north, be assured that even they cannot surpass us in ardent admiration of your unparalleled powers, and while we envy the priority of the female reformers of Bolton-le-Moors, and of Ashton-under-Lyne, in their testimonials to your rare excellence, we are proud to follow the example of the good women of Manchester, by marking, like them, our sense of your exalted merit, in a piece of plate, which an affectionate husband and a provident head of a family will not value the less, for being full as much calculated for utility as for ornament. This small, but earnest tribute from thankful hearts (which is not quite finished), shall, as well this commendation, find its way to your hands, without even the expence of carriage.

“ It will please you to learn that we have successfully introduced into our families the wholesome, and indeed palatable substitute recommended by you, in place of an article which nourishes corruption, by exacting from the vitals of the laborious. Those amongst us, who are in the public line, must of course supply our customers according to their wishes, without, however, affecting our family discipline.

“ This most faithful representation of the trading interests of this township has been long and well considered. There is scarcely one female head of any important business in this place, whose name you will not find underneath. Whilst we abjure all kind of offence to those, who resort to our places of

trade, we will not practice the deceit of disguising our sentiments. The worst has already happened, and has recoiled upon those, who would be oppressors. The father-in-law of one of the undersigned, only for the high crime of presiding at a reform meeting in this town about two months since, lost, it is true, twenty-eight of his customers upon the day after the meeting, but we have the comfort to assure you, that those twenty-eight were replaced by *thirty* new customers, as soon as that tyrannical meanness became generally known. Buyers and sellers are connected by reciprocal necessities. We are duly thankful for all favours in our respective concerns, but commercial gratitude does not imply servility of dependence.

"You, sir, may be assured that your Political Register, in whatever shape you may publish it, as well as your intended Evening Post, will not throughout the British Empire have more zealous promoters than the women of Richmond in Surrey, with the heartfelt concurrence of their male relatives, resolved to prove themselves as more inflexibly bent on continuing their co-operation in all lawful means for effectuating that paramount object, a radical reform of the Commons House of Parliament, upon which all other reforms are essentially consequential."

Cobbett saw not through the waggery of this address, he believed it to be genuine, the real dictates of the hearts of the female reformers of Richmond in Surrey, and he longed for the hour, when he was to be presented with the piece of plate, which at the time of getting up the address *was not yet finished*. After the lapse of about a fortnight, the piece of plate, being a tea-pot, was sent to Mr. Cobbett with the following inscription, "FROM THE FEMALE REFORMERS OF RICHMOND IN SURREY, TO THE GUARDIAN ANGEL OF REFORM." Within the vessel was a paper containing these words, "*The donors wish their humble gift was surrounded with gold and jewels.*" Thus far things went on satisfactorily, and Mr. Cobbett announced his intention of visiting his fair admirers, in the following singular and bombastic note.

“ MY DEAR COUNTRYWOMEN,

“ The female reformers of Richmond in Surrey, are hereby most respectfully informed, that I have, as the place is so near, resolved to go to Richmond, and deliver my answer to their *sensible, public spirited, and eloquent address*, in person; and that for that purpose, I shall, with a few friends, be at the Talbot on Sunday next, after divine service in the afternoon.

“ N. B.—It will be best to fix on a precise time, I will, therefore, *if I am alive and well*, be at the Talbot, at *precisely half-past four* on Sunday.”

However, in the course of that day, a suspicion arose that all was not right, and upon a close inspection of the tea-pot, it was discovered to be brass slightly plated over. Thus was the hoax discovered, but the manner in which Cobbett turns the tables upon the hoaxers, and makes them believe that they are the hoaxed, is a gem in the mine of Cobbett's treasures. Shakespeare says :

P. HENRY. What trick, what device, what starting hole canst thou now find out, to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

POINS. Come, lets hear, Jack, what trick hast thou?

FALSTAFF. *By the Lord, I know ye as well as he that made ye.*

Shakespeare was undoubtedly an admirable master of humour, and Falstaff is one of his richest comic characters, and this barefaced out-facing of the truth, is the very happiest touch in the picture of Falstaff, but Cobbett in his history of the hoax puts poor Shakespeare to the blush. It must, however, be previously noticed that to the address which was sent to Cobbett, were attached the names of Mrs. Forty of the Castle Tavern, of Mrs. Cream of the Star and Garter, of Mrs. Topham of the Talbot, together with the names of divers other females of respectability, by way of representing the female reformers of the town of Richmond; the ladies above alluded to, knowing no more than the dead of the well-meant-use, which had been made of their supposed signatures. By way of his avant couriers, Cobbett sent a

number of his newspapers (the Evening Post) which he had just started, to various places at Richmond, not forgetting to send two to Mr. Topham of the Talbot, whose lady had so nobly come forward in her congratulations on the return of the great champion of reform, and who also was supposed to have contributed to the silver tea-pot. The sun, however, which was to see Cobbett at the Talbot never rose, his intended visit was indeed promulgated by the parties connected with the hoax, who enjoyed to their hearts' content to see the arrival of some of the reformers for the purpose of welcoming Cobbett to the good and loyal town of Richmond. About the appointed hour, two radicals appeared at the Talbot, and very confidently inquired for Mr. Cobbett—The worthy host stared at the querist, for he neither knew Mr. Cobbett, nor wished for his presence in his house. In a short time, two more radicals crept into the Talbot, and again surprised the worthy host with their inquiry after Mr. Cobbett. These two were the precise counterparts of the two Paritans sent out of Gloucester to negotiate with the royalists at the siege of that city by king Charles' troops. No Cobbett, however, made his appearance at half-past four, nor at five—nor at six—nor at all, and now we come to relate the story in Cobbett's own words; and we may repeat. "By the Lord I knew ye, as well as he that made ye!!"

"The Courier," says Cobbett, "would fain make the public believe that I had been hoaxed by some persons at Richmond in Surrey. The facts are these. About three weeks or a month ago, I received an address from that town, signed by about forty female names. It was drawn up with great art, and the signatures were so ingeniously fabricated, that the authors must have made sure of success. Pains had been taken to change the hand-writing forty times, and to change the ink several times. *The address itself contained excellent sentiments.* But still the thing smelt of the priest. I took no notice of it. The address said that a piece of plate *was preparing*, and would be sent, as soon as finished. Finding that the bait had not taken, the indefatigable authors

after waiting three weeks, sent a tea-pot, so well fashioned as at first sight to be taken for silver, even by persons accustomed to examine such things. But the bearer slipping away without speaking of the nature of the contents of the box, led to an examination at once, when the deceit was discovered. The question now was how to hoax the hoaxers. I first on Thursday, said I would answer the address in print the next day, then on Friday, that I would answer the address in person at the Talbot Inn on Sunday evening. At this inn, and near it crowds were, I am told, assembled at the appointed hour, and amongst the most eager inquirers for my arrival, *were three gentlemen in black, with short powdered hair, and with hats in the shape of fire shovels*; and as I am informed by a gentleman who was present, when these black gentlemen found themselves hoaxed, they assumed countenances exactly like that of the hideous side of Mr. Hone's clerical magistrate. The Courier says that I was at Richmond *incog*. This is false upon the face of it. If I had been really hoaxed, and had gone to Richmond, I should have proceeded to the Talbot to be sure. No! the crafty gentlemen in fire shovel hats, were hoaxed after all, in spite of their change of hands writing and of ink, and in spite of their tea-pot into the bargain, which by the by, must have cost them two or three pounds at least."

Such is Cobbett's own account of this memorable hoax, but like the eel wriggling in the net, the more he attempts to escape, the more he becomes entangled. No doubt whatever existed that Cobbett was completely hoaxed, and no one can deny that it was only Cobbett's unconquerable effrontery that could have carried him through the affair with the appearance of so much success.

On the day preceding the death of George the third, Cobbett established an evening newspaper, entitled COBBETT'S EVENING POST, and as the demise of the crown occasioned a dissolution of parliament, an opportunity offered itself for the reformers of England to place their champion in parliament, when according to his own statement, by his sole efforts,

the country was to be saved from the ruin which, whilst he was in America, he had prophesied would ere long fall upon it. Coventry was the place fixed upon, that was to be honoured by so great a representative, but unfortunately previously to his being returned, it was necessary that a sum of money should be raised, and in proposing a subscription for that purpose, Cobbett presents us with a specimen of modesty, vanity and egotism, not to be paralleled in the history of any other man.

He thus addresses himself to the reformers of the kingdom, "To you I do, and I must look for support in my public efforts. As far as the press can go, I want no assistance. Aided by my sons, I have already made the ferocious cowards of the London press sneak into silence. But there is a large range, a more advantageous ground to stand on, and that is the House of Commons. If *I* were there, the ferocious cowards of the press would be compelled, through their three hundred mouths to tell the nation all that *I* should say! how much *I* should do!! and it is easy to imagine what *I* should say, how much *I* should do. A great effect on the public mind *I* have already produced, but what should *I* produce in only the next session, if *I* were in the House of Commons. Yet there, I cannot be without your assistance.

"The FUND FOR REFORM, I shall for the present, divert to this more pressing object; *so that that may go on* under its present name, or under this new appellation. The parliament may be dissolved in less than a week, so now there is no time to be lost; I would not call upon you for a farthing, but situated as I am, I should not, if I were to go, on this account, to any expence out of my own means, *act prudently in regard to myself*, nor justly towards others. What will be the sum required, I cannot exactly say. TWO THOUSAND POUNDS, perhaps a *little* more or less. *But whatever there may be over a sufficiency, shall be applied to the cause of reform.* Something approaching nearly £200 has been already actually received towards the fund for reform."

After this appeal to the reformers, and the subscriptions

not coming in so fast, in the opinion of Cobbett, as they ought to have done, taking into consideration the incalculable benefit that was to be obtained by it, he sent forth a circular to gentlemen of fortune, modestly calling upon them to subscribe each £10!! for the purpose of securing his seat in parliament. This circular is perhaps one of the most diverting specimens of impudence and egotism, that was perhaps ever committed to types and ink. Mr. Cobbett commences by stating, that he fears "*that the sum necessary to carry in the outlaying voters will not be sufficient.**" Success is certain if we raise the money. We shall be, I think, about £700 deficient, at the time when it will be wanted. A letter is this day despatched to seventy gentlemen, and if you, together with the rest of the seventy, send each of you ten pounds, *I shall to a certainty, be returned a member for Coventry."*

We will proceed to the exquisite reasons, which Mr. Cobbett urged to prove the deposit of ten pounds sterling a wise and prudent measure on the part of each of the gentlemen to whom he sent his circular, "*I !!! am of opinion that MY !!! stock of knowledge, MY !!! industry, and MY !!! recent experience, if they had a sphere for their full exertion, would greatly tend to produce, without any shock at all, the so anxiously desired change in public affairs!! For the express purpose of doing MY !!! utmost to save MY !!! country, I have returned to that country. MY !!! mind is MY !!! own, MY !!! love for MY !!! country, and MY !!! fear of her dangers, have swallowed up all private resentments. I !!! most anxiously desire to see*

* In a letter which Mr. Cobbett wrote to Mr. Tipper from Long Island, he tells him that he is getting ready a Grammar of the English language, and that in that work he had assembled together the fruits of all his observations on the construction of the English language. Now the fruits of those observations must have been very small indeed, for as a faulty and inaccurate writer, Mr. Cobbett will ever stand conspicuous. Thus, what sense can be made of the passage, "*That the sum necessary to carry in the outlaying voters will not be sufficient.*" It is sheer nonsense; he meant to say, we suppose, "*That the sum subscribed will not be sufficient to carry in the outlaying voters.*" This is, however, but one instance amongst a thousand, which could be selected of faulty construction, committed by an individual, who considered himself the most perfect writer of the age.

the present form of government preserved!!! I!!! wish to see MY!!! country again free and prosperous, and I!!! am convinced, that in one month (query, calendar or lunar,) I!!! should be able to suggest the means of effecting in a comparatively short time (i. e. ten days, or a fortnight?) her complete restoration !!!"

By way of a climax to this egoistical rhapsody, we will give an extract from Cobbett's letter to his son, James Paul Cobbett, giving him an account of the Coventry election.

"This election," says Cobbett, "as far as I had any part in it, must be considered as immediately connected with MY return to England, for had it not been with the hope of getting into parliament, I should not have returned, *foreseeing and foretelling as I did*, that measures for stifling the press would certainly be adopted, before the end of last year. Before I sailed, we had the news of the Manchester tragedy, and Sidmouth's letter to the magistrates. It was easy to see what was to follow, and it was at New York a common observation, *that the parliament would be sitting to receive me with new laws against the press*. My uncommonly short passage prevented this prediction from being fulfilled.

"But *I calculated on the king's death*, and the chance of getting into parliament, when that should happen. If I succeeded in this, I knew that I should very quickly produce a *great effect OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER!!* My desire was to produce a *healing effect*; to produce a change *within*, and to prevent it from being produced from without; to propose measures, calculated to restore the country to prosperity and peace; in short, *to do great things for the country, without any view to self-interest*."

In regard to the Coventry election, it would be presumptuous to give the history of it in any other words, than those in which Cobbett himself has described it; some parts of which are so truly original, so inimitably characteristic of the man, that on no account ought they to be omitted.

Mr. Cobbett commences by informing his son James Paul; "The moment the king's death was announced. I an-

nounced my intention to stand for Coventry," and he then proceeds to give his son a description of the city, informing him that nature and art appear to have exhausted their joint stock upon the land and cattle in that part of England, but that his future constituents—"Good God! what a miserable race of human beings! what a ragged, squalid, woe-worn assemblage of creatures," from which it would appear that the good people of Coventry in the time of Cobbett, were pretty much the same as in the time of Falstaff, when his recruits were such a set of ragged ragamuffins that he would not be seen marching through Coventry with them, "that's flat."

Cobbett proceeds, "My first step was to meet the London voters, to address them, and to explain my motives to them as fully as was necessary. You would have been charmed with their *enthusiasm*. You would have thought, *that they would have gone barefooted and fasting to Coventry to vote for me. They did not forget, however, to grasp as much money as they could*, and while I am happy to have to say, that some of them acted a most honourable and patriotic part, others of them appeared to be as selfish and greedy and base a crew as I ever set my eyes on. However the main part of the people at Coventry were very different from those London speculators in corruption, and had not brutal force been employed, *I should have been elected by a very large majority.*"

It would also appear from the following statement, that the *enthusiasm* of some of the good people of Coventry, was not so *charming* as that exhibited by the London speculators in corruption, for on the arrival of the candidate at Daventry, he was met by a parcel of men, whom the rich ruffians had made drunk, and who very unceremoniously informed him, that if he did not instantly return to London, they would take the liberty to throw him over the bridge. This circumstance rather staggered Mr. Cobbett, for he expected to have been met with banners flying, with drums beating and a crowd at least of 10,000 men, each vying which should have the honour of dragging him into Coventry. From this perplexity Cobbett

was happily relieved by the arrival of a gentleman, who informed him, that the enemy had drawn up, rank and file in the city, and that they were marching off to wreak their vengeance upon "the great enlightener of the human race," when the partizans of the latter nobly and boldly attacked them, and having broken their banners and split their drums, dispersed them in all directions, and were then on their way to greet his arrival.

This flattering intelligence induced Mr. Cobbett to push on with all possible speed; but alas! he was again doomed to endure a severe disappointment, for on his arrival at Dunchurch, the landlords of the two inns stood with their arms akimbo, and would neither allow him to enter their premises, nor furnish him with a chaise to convey him to Coventry. In this difficulty, Mr. Cobbett and his daughter got into a gig, which had been brought out by a friend, and got on as fast as they could. About four miles from Coventry, they were met by parties of young men, with laurel in their hats, and all the villages on each side of the road poured out their population, like bees swarming from a hive, to meet the great man, and by the time they had arrived at Coventry, the number had swelled to more than 20,000.

A post chaise being sent from Coventry, Mr. Cobbett and his daughter entered it, and now another calamity befel the candidate, which was *the loss of his voice*, which he represents as more vexatious to him than the loss of the election. It shall be told, however, in his own words.

"The people had drawn the chaise from the distance of about three miles from the city, and before we actually got into the streets, *the curiosity to see me was so strongly expressed, that I was obliged to get out of the chaise, and stand upon the foot-board, with my hat off*. The effect of this, added to a cold caught in London, proved in the end an evil, which I have lamented more than any other misfortune of my life, or rather than all other misfortunes put together. The loss of the election was a mere nothing, when compared with

the loss of my voice, which was nearly as complete, as if I had been dumb from my birth.

"I was thus drawn through all the principal streets, which did not occupy a space of much less than two hours in a frosty evening, part after sunset. The acclamations were so general and so hasty; the enthusiasm so great; the words as well as the actions of the mass of the people so clearly expressive of ardent attachment to the cause, OF WHICH I WAS THE REPRESENTATIVE, that it was not being at all credulous to suppose, that corruption, however foul and persevering, would be unable to produce finally, a successful resistance against me."

Cobbett now enters into a description of the savage and brutal conduct of the people of Coventry, which after making all due allowance for the exaggerating disposition of the narrator, is a disgrace to the character of the English nation. Cobbett gives an account of the way in which, as he terms it, he managed the brutes, and there cannot be a dissentient opinion, that it is truly worthy of his pen.

"The way," says Cobbett, "I managed the brutes, was well calculated to sting them and their employers to madness. I have, perhaps, as much of good humour on my countenance naturally, and as little of the gloomy, as any man that ever lived, and I defy the rich ruffians of Coventry to say, that the thousand pounds a day, which they expended on their savages, ever took away that good humour for a moment. My way was to stand and look upon the yelling beasts, with a most good humoured smile, turning my head now and then, leaning it as it were to take different views of the same person or the same group. I now and then, substituted something of curiosity, instead of the general total unconcern, that was seated upon my face. Now and then I would put my mouth close to the ear of some friend that stood by me, and then point to some beast that was foaming with rage, giving him at the same time a laughing look, such as we bestow upon a dog that is chained up and barking at us. Then another

time, when half a dozen fresh-drenched brutes were bursting forth close under my nose, I would stretch up my neck and look with apparently great curiosity, and anxiousness towards a distant part of the crowd, as if to ascertain what was passing there, and this I would do with so much apparent earnestness, and continue in the attitude so long, that the beasts really seemed, some times, as if they were going mad. I never had so good an opportunity to *philosophise* before. A friend, who saw these man brutes, said that they shook his faith in the immortality of the soul. But I see no reason at all for any such conclusion. I believe, and have long believed, that there are more sorts of men than of dogs. The mere circumstance of a creature walking upon two legs, is no proof that he is of the same kind and sort as I am, or as any other man of mind is. I really looked at and heard these brutes, till they became a subject of amusing speculation, and I could not help concluding that it would be a species of impiety to consider them as partaking in the smallest degree of such men as Pope or Paine. Your old sow, that went to the top of the hillock to ascertain which way the wind was coming, before she fixed on the side of the barn to put her pigs to bed for the night; your dog, Carnot, who finding his game, comes and in looks asks you to go with him to the spot; Boxer and Nap, who when on Long Island, sucked, in one year, at least five thousand eggs, and yet so wisely managed their affairs, as never to get one single drubbing, but even when the whip was raised, disarmed us all one after another—I thought of all these, whilst I was looking at and hearing the hired savages of Warwickshire; and I could not bring myself to feel any thing like anger towards the poor beasts, every one of whom I sincerely regarded as inferior to any of the animals above mentioned, and perhaps the far greater part of their employers are greatly inferior to CARNOT or old BESS. I am sure they are much less decent in their behaviour and discover less of intellect. The word fellow creature is generally very foolishly used. All created things, whether animate or inanimate, are fellow creatures. A Warwickshire savage or his em-

ployer, is therefore my fellow creature, but so is a bug, a flea or a louse as Swift observes, and as I may hold these latter things wholly beneath me in nature, so I trust, I may the former. I am sure I should be very miserable, if I could believe myself to be of the *same* nature.

“ This, or something very much like it, was the train of my ideas, while contemplating the horrid groups at the booth. A parcel of frogs or toads croaking in a pool of dirty water could as soon have disturbed the muscles of my face, as these miserable and degraded creatures could have done it. When one of the beasts attempted to strike me, however, the feeling became different. He reached over the side of the booth, and caught me by the collar, which was instantly repaid by a blow in his face, for, as Swift says, if a flea or a louse bite me, I'll kill it, if I can.”

The ladies of Coventry will not feel grateful to Mr. Cobbett for the following exhibition of their character, “ But what was still more shocking and disgusting than all the rest, was the sight of the wives and daughters of the rich ruffians, who were seated on the balconies and at the windows, looking directly down upon this scene and discovering every symptom of satisfaction and delight at hearing what would have made a bevy of common prostitutes hang their heads with shame ; and observe, these base-minded, these vile creatures, call themselves *ladies*. I most solemnly declare, that I have never seen any company of negro women, who I believe would not have run away at hearing what appeared to be highly engaging by these *ladies* of Coventry. Amongst the wives and daughters of the freemen and others, I met with some most excellent women, but I must say that the females of the rich ruffians of Coventry, were the most impudent, shameless, and hardened set of women that I ever saw. I remember seeing crowds of prostitutes on the point at Portsmouth, and I once saw three hundred, as they told us, on board of a seventy-four at Spithead, but I never before saw any thing in the shape of women, that would, as I believe, have remained and listened to what appear to give de-

light to the wives and daughters of the rich ruffians of Coventry.

The result of the Coventry election was, that Ellice and Moore were elected, by a majority of nearly 1000 over Cobbett, who only polled 517 voters, but he congratulated himself with the idea, that they were all plumpers, and therefore had his votes been split, he would have come very near to his opponents in the gross poll.

It was, however, not only the loss of the election, which Cobbett had to deplore, but he experienced a treatment from some of the aristocratical party in the immediate neighbourhood of Coventry, and particularly from the earl of Aylsford, which does not speak very highly for the character of that nobleman. The following is Cobbett's own account of this singular transaction, in a letter addressed to the earl of Aylsford.

"On the 5th, March, I went from Coventry to the Bull Head Inn, at the village of Marsden, five miles from Coventry, in the hope that a change of air would restore to me the use of my voice, which I had almost wholly lost by a cold, caught before I entered Coventry. I arrived there on the Wednesday afternoon. On the Thursday, the landlord, Mr. Hetherington told me that while I was out on a walk *you* (Lord Aylsford) had called to ask whether I was in the house, and being told that I was, you told the landlord, that you supposed he did not expect to have any connection with the gentlemen in the neighbourhood. The landlord, when he told me of this, appeared rather alarmed, but he was somewhat roused and fortified, and appeared to feel that he was not quite destitute of a soul, when I spoke of you and your interference, in terms of merited reprobation and contempt."

"The next day, whilst I was out on another walk, the adjutant of the Warwickshire yeomanry cavalry, of which I am told you are the colonel, came, and as the landlord told me, in true military style, *demanding my expulsion from the inn*. This hero swore in grand style, and threatened tremendously.

I could hardly refrain from treating the landlord as a slave, when I heard that he had not kicked the adjutant out of the house. And when he told me the story of *your* interference, I said to my son, if he had interfered thus with an American innkeeper, how the latter would have sent him across the road *from the toe of his shoe*.

"When I came in from a walk on Saturday, the landlord came to me with an account of new complaints, and told me that he had been assailed by several persons, and had at last been threatened, that unless he put me out of his house he should have his licence taken away. That is to say, unless he would commit a gross violation of the law of the land, he should have taken from him the means of gaining his livelihood.

"Having ordered dinner, the waiter informed us, that his master could not provide us with any more. Upon this, I sent for the landlord, and told him in plain terms, that if he was a slave, I was not, and that unless he supplied me with what I wanted, I would in the first place not pay his bill, and that in the next place, I would bring an action against him. The poor man was exceedingly distressed, but at last, we got some dinner. We returned to Coventry, according to my intention in the evening, and for that time heard no more of the matter. I left Marsden, feeling sorrow at seeing an Englishman reduced to a state of such complete slavery; but not without feeling some pride, that my bare presence near your dwelling had been capable of inspiring you with fear. *You* may come and reside at the inn at Botley, and not a soul in the county will either know or care when you come, or when you will go away, or will ever hear who or what you are. What a poor thing in the creation you are. When compared to *me*!! What an insignificant thing!"

While this verbal altercation was going on at Marsden, there was it seems something in the documentary way preparing, and we have it in the following article, copied from a Coventry newspaper.

"COBBETT AT MARSDEN.

"We, the undersigned inhabitants of Marsden and its neighbourhood, in order to manifest our *abhorrence and detestation of the principles of Cobbett*, and his adherents, do hereby publicly express our astonishment and disgust at the conduct of the proprietor of the Bull's Head Inn, *in having entertained him for so long a time, contrary to our general feeling and loyal spirit*, and further declare that we neither have had, nor will have any *connection* with Cobbett.

(Signed)

"AYLSFORD"

and thirty-one other persons.

"Here is a goodly group," exclaims Cobbett, "to disclaim all connection with me. You might have stopped till you had been asked to form such a *connection*, of which I never should have thought, unless I had been reduced to a state to 'say unto corruption, thou art my father, and to the worms thou art my mother and my sister!'"

The 9th May, 1821, was a day of triumph for Cobbett, the Bank commencing on that day to pay off their one pound notes in specie. The counsel which he gives on this occasion to the ladies, is truly original. He thus begins his friendly advice to them.

"Eh! It is, it is a guinea! Not less delighted than Scrub was when Archer put the shiner into his hands, am I at this moment, with a sum of sovereigns lying upon the table on which I am writing, just brought from the Bank, from the dear old lady in Threadneedle-street! She had numerous visitors yesterday, and she paid her one pounders honestly. Gold is always good. It does not burn to ashes. The breaking of bankers does not effect its value. Maiden ladies! Neat servant maids turned of thirty! Pray remember, that if a purse of gold is not so good as a lover of twenty-two, it is of earthly blessings, the next thing to him. Turn the dirty rags out of your escrutoires and boxes. Let them no longer defile your smoothly-ironed robes and nicely-plaited caps. Put a purse of gold in the snug corner, which those vile rags so

unworthily occupy, and if it bring you not lovers, it will secure you every comfort short of that, which lovers only can communicate, and in the meanwhile, instead of the picture of an old hag upon the corner of a bit of paper, it will give you the picture of our gay and gallant king, stamped on imperishable gold, and on the other side, you will see him on horseback, driving his spear into the bowels of the paper money hydra while he utters these words, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense,*" *this is shame to the base villains, who disapprove of this my deed.*

The year 1821 was a busy year for Cobbett in the business of publishing, embracing subjects of a very different character, but all of them treated in a way peculiarly his own. He first published his work of *Paper against Gold*, which may be considered as one of the best ever published on that subject, consisting of all the essays which he wrote on the paper system from 1803 to 1806. His next work was his "*Cottage Economy*," embracing the most approved "*Method of brewing, baking, rearing cows, pigs, poultry, and bees.*" This work Cobbett informs us, was written with the view of preventing the misery which is brought upon labouring families by the pot-house and the tea-kettle.

We know that it is customary to eulogize this work, as containing sound practical remarks, on the subjects of which it professes to treat—We, however, must express our dissent to the above opinion, and openly declare, that the instructions given therein are not founded on correct practice, and that whoever follows them, will find himself egregiously disappointed in his expectations. The pages of the *Cottage Economy* are not appropriated to the subjects of which the author professes to treat, for when the cottager opens it with the view of being instructed in the art of brewing, he will find a long tirade against taxation, and a violent philippic against excisemen. Six eighths of the book are taken up with political disquisitions on the injustice of taxing the commodities of life, on the comparatively degenerate condition of the English farmers with that of former times, and the extreme folly of a man

not being able to make his breakfast on a couple of pounds of cold fat bacon. On the subject of bees, the book is not worthy of being consulted at all; there is not a single precept in it that can be followed with any hope of success, or which is in the least consistent with the natural economy of the insect. On the whole, the Cottage Economy, is a work which will never sustain the character of a standard book of reference, nor will it add to the literary reputation of the author.

His next work was a "Volume of Sermons!!" On this subject Cobbett says, "That it was the Six Acts which *inspired* me with the thought of *preaching in print*. *Tract* is beneath the thing described, and besides, the public *will have* mine to be sermons. Sermons, therefore, they shall be." As a proof of the piety of the days in which we live, and of my superiority over the doctors, I will venture to say, that I am able to prove a ten times greater sale of my sermons, than can be proved of the sermons of any doctor that belongs, or ever did belong to either of the universities."

Not satisfied with expressing this high eulogium of his sermons, Cobbett sends forth a challenge to the two universities and all the parsons, "Five of my monthly sermons, *price* three pence each," says he, "have been published, and nearly forty thousand sermons have been sold. Now I hereby challenge the above bodies and individuals to show, that any hundred sermons, published by members of their cloth, ever had a sale to the same number. We already beat the 'Tract Society' out of the water, and it must mind its hand, or people will not take its pamphlets, even at a gift, except for purposes which it would be hardly decent to describe. The nation has to thank Six Act for this publication. The spirit was in motion; it was working within, and feeling itself checked in its former channel by Six Act, it broke out in this new manner."

Of these sermons, of which twelve were published, it is merely necessary to state, that the only characteristics which they bear of that particular species of literature, are the texts at the beginning, and the frequent quotations of scripture; in

other respects, they are nothing more than a series of political essays, on some of Cobbett's favourite subjects, such as "Public Robbers," "Tithes and Parsons," "God's Judgment on Unjust Judges,"* &c. &c.

Having fully satisfied himself, and as he supposed the public too, of the excellence of his sermons, and his challenge to the universities, like that of Paul of Russia to the kings of Europe, never having been answered, he next gives his advice to the money hoarders of the kingdom, to sell out stock and get sovereigns, and by no means to keep a bank note in their possession, the latter particularly, on account of the character, which he lays before them, of the lady of Threadneedle-street. The following sketch of her could only have been written by Cobbett.

"The old lady in Threadneedle-street, is in one respect, I believe, like all other ladies, young as well as old; that is, if you mean to enjoy her favours, take her when she is in the mood. Ladies are very punctillious in this particular, and they are in the right. Their favours are of a nature to be not *received*, but *leaped at*. It is not *coldness* in such a case which is to be talked of, but want of *fire*. Bear this in mind my friends, the hoarders; recollect that the dame is rather *ancient* too; she makes the *first advance*; for the honour of both sex, take her at her word; fly to her embraces, and rifle her of those charms, which will give you enjoyments unspeakable, and that will stick by you to the end of your lives.

"She may, and suddenly too, change her mind. She is no *chicken*, no sighing shepherdess, not she. She will never dangle from a bed tester, nor dive into a pond at the coldness of a lover. She has been long disciplined in the ways of man. She can give a coy swain a kick in the ribs, or a slap in the chops, with any lass of Billingsgate. Take her, therefore whilst she is kind. Her heart is open now; jump at her, lest she close it up again, some slight symptoms of a

* Particularly those who condemned him to two years imprisonment, and afterwards to a fine of 1000*l* for a libel on Mr. Wright.

disposition to do which I have already observed, and have duly informed you of. And remember, she is a very devil incarnate, if you slight her. She is pretty well accustomed to acts of a sternish cast. If she take the whim, she will throttle you in a moment. Take the dame while the smiles are on her face, for if she frown only once more, the Lord have mercy upon you. No matter for her expiring in the fit of rage herself, *you* are destroyed in the mean time, therefore be warned and be wise in time."

Having thus settled the affairs of the old lady of Thread-needle-street, Mr. Cobbett next turns his attention to ladies' bonnets—Thus Cobbett writes, "The thoughtless young fellow may exclaim, 'What have *you* to do with ladies' bonnets, or anything else belonging to them, sour and shrivelled old crab as you are?' Come, sirs, no abuse; age is honourable, though seldom coveted, and wrinkles are better, and even less ugly than bloated cheeks and eyes red with wine. Learn this from me, women like *sober* men; they would rather indeed that they were *young too*, and a great deal rather; but still they will put up with a little age, and even with a few wrinkles, in preference to bloated, beastly youth, with the smell of an over-night's table, and with breath like the stale exhalation of a bung-hole. I have to do with ladies' bonnets, and strange as it may appear at first sight, this really is a subject of a political nature."

It appears from Cobbett's account that a bonnet had been sent to the Society of Arts in the Adelphi, from a Miss Woodhouse, living at Weathersfield, in the State of Connecticut, in the United States of America, and a Mr. Hack, a member of the Society of Arts, wrote to Mr. Cobbett, stating to him what had taken place in regard to this bonnet, which was declared by persons connected with the Leghorn bonnet trade to be worth fifty guineas! It was necessary that some one should see Miss Woodhouse and obtain some further knowledge of the nature of the grass of which the bonnet was made, accordingly Mr. Cobbett wrote to his son James, "his dear little James," as the refined and

delicate Scarlett called him, and for which, says Cobbett, I trust he will live to make Scarlett a suitable return. This son James, accordingly went to Weathersfield, although a distance of 100 miles, obtained a specimen of the grass, and despatched it to his father in London. Some seeds of the grass were afterwards obtained, the grass was grown by Mr. Cobbett, and when woven into plait, the Society of Arts bestowed upon him the silver medal for the introduction of so valuable a commodity into this country.

Towards the close of 1821, Mr. Cobbett began the publication of his *Rural Rides*, which may be considered as one of the most entertaining works he ever wrote; for obvious reasons, however, we decline the insertion of any part of them, having some fear about us of the Attorney-general, and not being desirous of it being imputed to us, that with the knowledge of one party having been prosecuted for the publication of them, we should be guilty of the folly of following so dangerous an example.*

In the month of May 1822, Mr. Cobbett received an invitation from some gentlemen of the town of Farnham and its neighbourhood, to dine with them on the thirtieth of that month. We regret that our limits will not allow us to give the whole of the proceedings which took place on that occasion, and therefore we shall briefly confine ourselves to those prominent parts which bear particularly upon the character of Cobbett. He thus commences his account of the meeting.

“ I have long since passed that point within which man can with propriety be accused of what is called egotism. If I were not, it would be impossible for me to separate, at this time of day, a great deal of that which closely concerns my-

* In regard to the injunction which was obtained against a work, entitled the *Beauties of Cobbett*, on the ground that it was an infraction of copyright, we are decidedly of opinion, that had either the proprietors or the publishers of that work gone into court, the injunction would have been dissolved, on the ground that the person claiming the copyright could not, as the law now stands, have proved his title to it.



THE HOUSE AT SPARKHAM in which W. C. C. was born.

AS IT APPEARS IN 1830

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self, from that which must now be interesting to the country at large. I proceed, therefore, without more ceremony to state, that for the last thirty years I have been almost wholly unacquainted with any person, except merely my immediate relations, living in or near the place of my birth, and when I was a boy, my situation in life was such as to preclude the probability of persons at all connected with wealth or influence, having any knowledge of me. When I say thirty years, I mean that I have scarcely been in that place, except passing through it, during the whole of that time, and from about twelve years of age, I resided in or near the place but very little. It was, therefore, with a degree of gratification, that I should very difficultly express, that I received about ten days ago, a written invitation, signed by about thirty gentlemen of the town of Farnham and its neighbourhood, to dine in that town on the thirtieth instant, in company with such of my townsmen, as would be there present on the day appointed. On Tuesday morning I set off from London for Mr. Knowles's, at Thursley, and yesterday proceeded in company with that gentleman to Farnham."

The dinner was held at the Goat's Head, Mr. John Leech, of Lea, in the chair, and on the health of Mr. Cobbett being drunk, he addressed the company in a long and able speech, from which we must be content to make the following extracts.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Cobbett, "it is not a nabob, loaded with the spoils of slaves; it is not a lucky adventurer in the rich mines of corruption, whose return you are assembled to welcome, but one, who after a long absence, and after having had to endure the buffetings of that corruption, comes back to you almost as destitute as to riches, as he left you. On your part, therefore, no motive can be more pure, no motive more generous. It must be well known to you all, that for many years past, I have been endeavouring in every way that suggested itself to my mind, to stem the torrent of corruption, and to produce a reform in the parliament. Those who have been fattening on that corruption, or have been

wishing to fatten upon that corruption, the faction out of power, as well as the faction in power, have entertained a degree of hatred towards me quite commensurate with the magnitude of these my exertions. For nearly twenty years, and incessantly for thirteen years, this combination, not less unnatural than it was powerful, has existed, and it is by no means an exaggeration to say, that one object of which they have never lost sight, has been to *keep me down*. Strange as it may seem, incredible as it may appear to posterity, monstrous as is the proposition, there is no person of the present day, who has paid but an ordinary attention to what we call politics, but must be convinced that no small part of the measures of those, who have borne sway in this country have turned on the question, Will their adoption or rejection *tend to fulfil the prophecies of Cobbett?*"

In regard to radical reform, Mr. Cobbett says, "For my own part, I prefer *radical reform*. The word radical has been interpreted to mean, amongst other horrid things, sedition and rebellion. But what does it mean? It means something belonging to or appertaining to the root, and if we have an evil to remove, is it not necessary to go to the root of it? can we remove it without going to the root of it? There may be those who have their pastures infested with docks, who prefer the cutting of them off just beneath the ground, to the digging of them clean up. I am for the latter mode, in politics as well as in husbandry, I am for going to the root, and therefore am for a radical reform. We are asked by those who are really for doing nothing, what *good* a reform can do us, and whether it would put any money into the distressed farmer's pocket, perhaps it might not put money *into* his pocket, but the next best thing is to prevent money from being taken *out* of his pocket, and this to a certainty is *what* a reform in the House of Commons would do."

Mr. Cobbett closes his account of this meeting in the following style:

"I came away, and returned home to Kensington, having spent a day, which certainly I may consider as one of the

happiest of my life, though few men perhaps ever spent so many happy days as myself. Farnham, compared with many other places, is small, and somewhat obscure, and the value I set upon this invitation, is founded principally upon the evidence, which I consider it to be, of the progress of those opinions and those principles, in the general prevalence of which, and in that alone I can see, and have been able to see any hope of deliverance for the country. The progress of knowledge is at all times slow, even under the most favourable circumstances, what must then be its progress, not only with nothing extraneous to aid it, but with the whole force of every man in power in the kingdom against it, with ninety-nine hundredths of that powerful engine, the press, constantly aiding that tremendous opposition. The base ruffians; the hired, the mercenary, the savage knaves, that have been spreading slanders about the country under my own name; these most detestable villains, who conscious of impunity, knowing well what picking and packing can do in the way of giving them security; these worse than poisoners and cut-throats, who have been spreading about the country, at the enormous expence of villains, who, if possible, exceed the agents in atrocity; these ruffians have constantly taken particular pains to supply the town of Farnham with publications purporting to be written by me, but containing the most abominable falsehoods, the most diabolical slanders against myself. These have not wanted circulators amongst the speculators, or would be speculators, in the town and neighbourhood. But where were the slanders, and the slanderers, when I myself made my appearance upon that spot? In how many cases have these vile ruffians been furnished with opportunities to meet me face to face, to avow their publications, and to vouch for the work of their pen with their tongue. In how many cases have I afforded them this opportunity? My path has been straight-forward, and straight-forward it shall be. I detest above all things that hypocrisy, which I would, but which dare not commit the acts, of which the bold and open villain is guilty."

The suicide of Lord Castlereagh in August 1822 furnished Cobbett with an ample theme for the exercise of his talents, and perhaps on no occasion did he put them forth with greater force or effect. In his Register of August 24th, he addresses "A Letter to the boroughmongers on Castlereagh's cutting his throat, and on their own probable fate." At the commencement, Cobbett says, "*Let me express to you my satisfaction that Castlereagh has cut his throat.* Only a few weeks ago I addressed a Register to this very man who has now cut his throat. In that Register, which by-the-by was much more likely to be the cause of his throat-cutting, than the causes assigned by his friends, in that Register I reminded him of what I said to him in the year 1815, when he was making such fine treaties, when he was bargaining about the museums and Napoleon, and when he was clapped and huzzaed by the very basest crowd, the most degraded and most cruel and cowardly and infamous gang of vagabonds that ever disgraced the human form. In 1816, I declared him to be out of his wits. His language in the debates upon Mr. Western's motion of that year, and about the time of that motion, convinced me that he was what they call cracked, or that he was, at the very least, the wildest of mortals.

"It would seem at first sight that the concern would lose something by the death of this silly creature. But this is a concern of a singular character. It does not stand upon sense or reason. Those who have the carrying of it on, need not be overburdened with understanding. Indeed, men of real knowledge and talent never could make it wag an inch. But notwithstanding this, the throat-cutting will produce a great effect. Some are talking about the difficulty to find a man to supply the place of Castlereagh, but the thing for the minister to look after is, something that will make those who followed at his heels forget that it has now been proved, that they were all the while crouching and confiding in an *ass* person."

In the letter which Cobbett wrote to Joseph Swann, who was sentenced to four years and a half imprisonment in

Chester jail for selling pamphlets, he thus begins "CASTLEREAGH HAS CUT HIS THROAT AND IS DEAD. *Let that sound reach you in the depth of your dungeon, and let it carry consolation to your suffering soul.*"

He then goes on to state. "To talk of his mind having sunk under the load of his business is quite monstrous. It is beastly nonsense, it is nonsense such as Castlereagh himself ever uttered, to talk of his having been driven out of his senses by his load of business. *Deep thinking*, some people say, will drive a man mad. This is a very foolish notion, but at any rate how deeply Castlereagh thought may be judged of by his speeches and the result of his measures. It is not now that I say it for the first time or for the thousandth time, for I have always said, that it was one of the most empty-headed creatures that ever existed, and that it was sheer impudence, and the imbecility of its opponents that carried it through with a sort of eclat, such as a mountebank obtains amongst clowns.

As to compassion! as to sorrow upon this occasion, how base a hypocrite I must be to affect it, nay how base a hypocrite to disguise, or attempt to disguise my satisfaction. Can I forget Ireland? can I forget Mr. Finnerty? can I forget Napoleon? Marshal Ney? can I forget the Queen, who though she suffered so much, though she suffered to the breaking of her heart, never thought of the dastardly act of cutting her own throat.

"Now let us take another view of the matter. According to the witnesses examined on the inquest, his lordship had been insane for a fortnight. According to others, he had been insane for a shorter space of time. But it unfortunately happened, that he was present and formed one in council with the king on the Friday previously to the Monday on which he cut his throat. According to the lady's maid's account he was insane some days, while he was appearing and speaking in parliament. These witnesses do indeed call it *illness*, and *mental debility*, and *nervousness*, and *head-ache*, and *mental delirium* but it will be evident to every one that its proper

tended with the greatest pain. At this particular period, the asperity between these two radicals was greatly augmented in consequence of an action which was brought by Byrne, for whom a subscription was raised in London, against Sheriff Parkins, to whom the subscriptions were paid, on the ground that he had not duly accounted for all the sums which he had received. The trial came on, and a verdict was given in favour of Byrne, for £196. Mr. Parkins was not satisfied with this verdict, and applied for a new trial, which was granted, and the verdict was reduced to £150. On the latter trial, Mr. Hunt was examined, who stated that Byrne had called upon him, and in the course of conversation mentioned, that Mr. Cobbett had not paid over to Mr. Parkins all the money that he had received, and spoke in very obscure terms of Mr. Cobbett. A few days afterwards, Mr. Hunt was very much surprised to read in one of Cobbett's Registers, a direct charge of perjury against him, as connected with the evidence he had given upon the trial. On the other hand, Byrne makes an affidavit, that he never spoke to Mr. Hunt disrespectfully or injuriously of Mr. Cobbett, but that on the contrary, Mr. Cobbett and all his family had acted towards him with a generosity and kindness that totally surpassed his powers of description.

In the face however of this affidavit, Mr. Hunt brought an action against Mr. Cobbett for the publication of a libel, founded upon the testimony given by him in the case of *Byrne v. Parkins*. The cause came on for trial, and Mr. C. Phillips, who was counsel for Mr. Cobbett, kept the court in a continual roar of laughter in the facetious comparisons which he drew between the highly polished character of Mr. Hunt, and the high polish of his blacking.

The jury considering that the character of Mr. Hunt stood as high after the publication of the alleged libel, as it did before, found their verdict for Mr. Cobbett. We shall have an opportunity in a subsequent part of this work to exhibit the manner in which Mr. Hunt repaid Mr. Cobbett, for the abuse which the latter heaped upon him.

Mr. Cobbett was now busily employed in his literary labours, his work on the Protestant Reformation, and the Woodlands, both going through the press at the same time. Of the latter work, he says, "The second number of the Woodlands was very nearly ready for the press, when the smashings in London, and all over the country, when the bowlings of the jews, and the whinings of the quakers came and drove out of my head all thoughts about Woodlands, and all the poetical ideas about the blowing of the flowers and the singing of the birds. I hope that I shall shortly resume these sylvan labours, much sooner, I hope, than Mr. Robinson will again be able to cause prosperity *to be dispensed from the ancient portals of a constitutional monarchy.*"

The smashing of the rooks, (i. e. the country banks) as Cobbett styled them, although it might for a time have diverted his mind from the Woodlands, did not wholly abstract it from attending to objects connected with them, and from which he expected to derive a considerable profit. Scarcely a Register now appeared in which he did not inform the public of the different sort of seeds and trees which he had on hand, specifying their prices, and eulogizing their respective qualities. Of apple trees, of the first and second class, he informs his readers *that he has none*, and therefore they need not trouble him on that head, but of the third class, *they are welcome to trouble him as much as they please*, advising them to take a *hundred* at a time, by which a saving will be made of fifteen shillings, as singly, they are nine pence each. It is really amusing to observe the quaint and concise manner in which Cobbett announces the prices and qualities of these seeds and trees, founding their goodness chiefly on their being collected and grown by himself, "*My cleverness in which*," says Cobbett, "*it would be folly to dispute.*"

In the month of March 1826, Mr. Cobbett paid a visit to Norwich, and in his Register of that month, he inserts the following singular advertisement.

"*I notify to my friends in Norfolk, that it is my intention*

to be at Norwich on the 24th, and that *I* will dine with as many as have a mind to dine with me, at the Bowling Green Inn on the 25th."

Although this invitation to the good people of Norfolk smacked strongly of vanity, and a hunting after popularity, yet Cobbett was punctual to his time at the Bowling Green Inn, his motive for going thither, being according to his own account, "merely to talk to his friends in Norwich, as those gentlemen have made me talk to the whole country, and I am much, very much obliged to them for having done so."

To give an account of the dinner or of Mr. Cobbett's speech, would be merely a repetition of the sentiments which he had expressed a hundred times before, not forgetting, however, to impress it strongly upon the minds of his auditors, that they were henceforth to look upon him as one of the greatest prophets, who had appeared since the days of Moses. *They all knew* that he had predicted the smashing of the rooks, and smashed they had, his prophecy had been fulfilled, and it was not to be disputed, that he who prophesied and whose prophecy came true—was to all intents and purposes, indisputably a prophet.

The trade in seeds and trees not having exactly fulfilled the expectations of the projector, Mr. Cobbett proceeds to inform the readers of his Registers, that he has another article to dispose of, which are some maps of the United States of America. The chief recommendations of these maps are, in Cobbett's own words "That the map is covered, it is on canvass, and on rollers; it was executed at Philadelphia the year before—it is very pretty, and, in truth, it is the completest thing I ever saw in my life. The price **FOUR GUINEAS.**"

We mention these apparently trivial things, to show the singularity of the human character, and particularly that of Cobbett. Great and noble in some things was the mind of that extraordinary man, mean and petty was it in others. It could wrestle at one moment with a giant, and the next make a giant of a pigmy. It could attach an importance to an

object, in which no one else could discover any importance at all, and in which none did actually reside. Borne away by an unconquerable spirit of vanity, Cobbett considered that whatever he did, or said, whatever article he recommended or had to dispose of, derived all its value from himself, its intrinsic worth in the hands of any other person would be nothing. It is, however, in these minor shades, that the real character of the man peeps out, and it is impossible for any one to peruse his little notices at the end of his Registers, without discovering in every one a fresh proof of the most egregious vanity and egotism, and of the extreme meanness of the individual, who with the view of collecting a few pounds, had become a dealer in almost every article by which a penny was to be got. As a further recommendation and inducement to the readers of the Register to purchase his maps, he informs them that he intends to keep one for his own use, "which must convince my readers at once that it is a good thing. I shall therefore only dispose of nine, and if any one will take the whole off my hands at once, I will say 36 pounds instead of 36 guineas!!"

The month of April 1826 was a busy month for Cobbett, for we find him taking the chair at the **FEAST OF THE GRIDIRON** at the London Tavern, and we also find him, where he was generally to be found, in one of the courts of law defending himself either from a charge of libel, or for having overlooked the payment of some pecuniary obligation. In regard to the first, it may be necessary to state the origin of Mr. Cobbett affixing the figure of the gridiron to his Register, which was a mark of triumph that his *prophecy* respecting Peel's Bill was completely verified, and it was taken from the following remark, extracted from one of Cobbett's Registers written at Long Island. In the room in which the feast of the gridiron was held, the following placard was posted.

"PEEL'S BILL.

"This bill was grounded on concurrent reports of both houses, it was passed by unanimous votes of both houses;

it was at the close of the session a subject of high eulogium in the speaker's speech to the regent, and in the regent's speech to the two houses. Now then I, WILLIAM COBBETT, assert, that to carry this bill into effect is *impossible*, and I say that if this bill be carried into full effect, I will give Castlereagh leave to lay me on a GRIDIRON and broil me alive, while Sidmouth may stir the coals, and Canning stand by and laugh at my groans."

The small note bill, passed in 1822, partly repealed Peel's Bill before the day for its going into full effect, and in December 1825, the one pound notes of the Bank of England came out again, so that here was the above prophecy completely fulfilled.

Mr. Cobbett took the chair at this dinner, and as usual delivered a speech full of abuse of the ministers, and especially of the members of the committee, who sat on the Bank Restriction Bill. The toasts which he proposed were, perhaps, such as were never drunk at any public dinner before, and we will venture to say, will never be drunk again. The following may serve as a specimen.

The KING, and may he once more and exclusively exercise the prerogative of making money."

"THE INDUSTRIOUS AND LABOURING PEOPLE, and may their food and raiment cease to be taken from them by the juggling of the paper system."

"BEEF, MUTTON, PORK, and VEAL, may they be again, as they formerly were, the food of the poorer sorts of people in this kingdom."

"POTATOES and POTATONS alone, may they become the diet of those who still uphold the paper money."

"THE MINISTERS, thanks to them for their intention to put an end to the worthless rags, which, worthless as they are, can cause famine in the midst of plenty."

"On the meeting breaking up," Mr. Cobbett says, "many of those present got about me, and eagerly sought to pay me some mark of respect, which I consider was due to me for my exertions in smashing the rooks." Well might Cobbett

say, that he was arrived at that period of life, when he might be allowed to indulge in a little egotism, if he had added vanity, no one would have felt disposed to contradict him.

In the month of April 1826, we find Mr. Cobbett in a court of law, on an action brought against him by a person of the name of Farlar, for the recovery of the sum of £32 5s. being the amount due to the plaintiff for two brewing machines, one of which Cobbett alleged was a present to him, and consequently would reduce the debt to about £15. This was very satisfactorily proved to have been the case, and the jury found a verdict for the plaintiff for only £14 10s. considering that the larger machine was a present. It was supposed that this action never would have been brought against Mr. Cobbett, but for the disparaging manner in which he had spoken of the brewing machines, of which Mr. Farlar was then the patentee, and it may be added, that it was chiefly owing to the character which Mr. Cobbett put forth of these machines, that the demand for them rapidly declined, and they are now wholly out of use.

The dissolution of parliament in May 1826, gave Mr. Cobbett another opportunity of attempting to obtain a seat in parliament, and accordingly he issued an address to the electors of Preston, offering himself as a candidate for their suffrages, and telling them, that there was not an individual in all England so fit to represent them as himself. "You have seen, my good friends," he says, "what one man, though at a distance of three thousand miles, with a great ocean between you and him has been able to do *out of the house*, and I trust in God, you will see the day, when that man will show you what one man *can do in the house*."

On the 18th May, Mr. Cobbett left Kensington for Preston, taking Liverpool in his way, from which place he was accompanied by Mr. Thomas Smith, and on arriving at Preston they were met by a considerable number of people, bearing two or three flags, on one of which was painted a gridiron, with other emblems descriptive of the triumph of

topics of his speech were the same as he had introduced into his speech at Preston.

At Chorley he also stopped to address the people, and at a little village called Bamber Bridge, about seven miles nearer to Preston, the crowd had swelled to a vast body. It was, however, remarked that the great majority of the assembly was composed of young women, who, according to Mr. Cobbett's own account, all seemed very anxious that he should address them. He was, however, very coy on this occasion, and pleaded fatigue, but on seeing so many pretty smiling faces about him, he could not leave them without saying a few words to them. He explained to them the way in which they particularly were made to pay the taxes; they paid a tax on sugar, tea, soap, &c. the items of which he minutely explained, "Now," said Mr. Cobbett "this is the way in which you pay the taxes, though you do not know that you are paying them. But we have been told by Sir Robert Peel, the great master manufacturer, you know, that this paying of taxes is nothing; it is only a paying by one part of the family into the pockets of another part. To be sure it is in the family way, but you will please to recollect, how many a single family get as much as all of you here together, and get it too out of your earnings. A pretty family concern it is truly. These things must be remedied. Measures must be proposed and adopted for that purpose; and it is in your power to do something towards that issue, by helping to send to parliament a man, who can propose such a measure. I therefore exhort you, my fair countrywomen, to exercise that influence with which you are gifted over those men, who have anything to do with Preston. You are all so young that I am sure you cannot be married. If you have not husbands, you *certainly* have sweethearts, prevail on them, such at least as are connected with Preston, to give me all the support they can."

Having uttered a few more pleasing flatteries to the spinsters of Chorley, Mr. Cobbett proceeded to Preston, where he was received in the most flattering manner, and when the carriages

arrived at the Castle Inn, the people were so densely wedged together, that all access to the inn was rendered impossible. Mr. Cobbett could not address them from the carriage, and therefore he was very politely lifted out of it, and being placed on the shoulders of a sturdy Preston man, he was carried pickaback into the Castle Inn amidst much cheering and laughing. In a short time he appeared at one of the windows, and made a long speech to the multitude, assuring them, that if they returned him as their member, they would have the most efficient one, which had ever sitten for the borough of Preston.

An active canvass was now commenced by Mr. Cobbett and his party; there were three candidates opposed to him, Mr. Stanley, (now Lord Stanley,) Mr. Wood, and Captain Barrie. The limits of this work will not allow of our entering upon the details of the occurrences which marked the progress of the election. The following are, however, the leading facts. The candidates, to whom Mr. Cobbett was most opposed were Mr. Stanley and Mr. Wood. The election of the former was considered pretty certain, and therefore the contest lay between Mr. Wood and Mr. Cobbett. It is much to be regretted, that in the different speeches which Mr. Cobbett made, he entered into personalities respecting the candidates, which, as between gentlemen, are perfectly unjustifiable, even on occasions of acrimonious contention. It was by this coarse and ungentlemanly conduct on the part of Mr. Cobbett, that he alienated from him the votes of many individuals, who, had he confined himself within the limits of fair, temperate discussion, would doubtless have given him their support. We will only give one specimen of the conduct of Cobbett, which took place at the close of the election.

Referring to the candidates, he said, "My feelings towards them are all pretty much upon an equality. The Captain I hate and detest."

Captain Barrie, (very good humouredly) "Thank you sir."

Mr. Cobbett, "Because"—

Captain Colquitt, "Because he is an honest man and a gentleman!"

Mr. Cobbett, "Because he is so ungenerous and so cruel as to put the oath of supremacy to the catholics. As to the gentleman upon his left; the gentleman of the Book of Wonders. that prince of hypocrites, Mr. Wood, I despise him from the bottom of my soul, (cries of shame and hisses) and as to the individual (Mr. Stanley) the very much spitten upon individual, upon his left, again I tell him that I loathe him, as I loathe everything that is nasty (cries of shame, and turn him out, turn the old bone grubber out). At the captain I knit my brows and bite my lips; at the hero of the Book of Wonders, (Wood) I turn up my nose; at the foolish, haughty, insolent individual (Mr. Stanley), I stop my nose," (tremendous uproar; cries of disgusting; off Cobbett). In this strain did Mr. Cobbett continue to speak till his friends were ashamed of him, and his enemies hooted and hissed him, until he was completely silenced.

The election closed on the 26th June, when Mr. Stanley and Mr. Wood were declared duly elected—the numbers being for Stanley 3,044, Wood 1982, Barrie 1657, Cobbett 995. The account which Mr. Cobbett gives of his departure from Preston, and the occurrences which took place on his way to London, is perhaps unparalleled in the whole range of English literature for bombast, hyperbole, and the most inflated egotism. We regret much that our confined limits prevent us giving the whole account, and therefore we must content ourselves with the following extracts.

"The election," says Mr. Cobbett, "ended on Monday the 26th June, and I staid at Preston during the 27th, until about eight in the evening. At that hour I addressed the people at the usual place. There were from ten to fifteen thousand assembled. At the conclusion of my speech, I said that the whole town was there assembled, and, therefore, I called upon them to signify by a show of hands whether they would still wish to have me for their member. NEVER *was there*

such a show of hands, NEVER approbation so unanimous, cheers so cordial, and honour so great!!!

“We took our departure from Preston in an open carriage and pair. We were preceded by a volunteer band of music, and we were accompanied by not less than ten or fifteen thousand people, and greeted with cheers and blessings until we got quite beyond the boundaries of the town. From the moment of my entering the town, to the moment of my quitting, *no one ever heard my name pronounced in public unaccompanied by applause, and I can truly say, that the seal, that the testimony of public regard for me, that every demonstration which I could wish to behold, became more general and more ardent from the first moment of my appearance on the scene, until the last moment of my remaining upon it.*

“From Preston we pushed on to Blackburn. Here we found a people equal to those which we had left. An advanced guard had come out to meet us, and to inform us that there were thousands assembled at the entrance of the town; we soon found ourselves surrounded by not less than *ten or fifteen* thousand people, (Mr. Cobbett’s favourite number). Such huzzaing! such shaking of hands!! such congratulations!!! such praises!!!! such blessings from hundreds and thousands of lips!!!! Why, a day of life like this is better than a whole age of the life that a tyrant or a log has to live. I would not exchange the recollection of what passed at Blackburn, for all the riches that the world has to bestow. Excellent good fellows at Blackburn, say I!! The streets of Blackburn are narrow, and the houses lofty, the people were so thick in the street, the weather was so hot, the evening so close, and the exertion of the people to squeeze along to get to me to shake hands with me was so great, that the *sweat and the breath together made a sort of fog, through which we rode for more than half a mile!!!* For fear of accidents, I had allowed the horses to be taken from the carriage, and we were thus conducted to a house called the *Bull, into which for some reason or other, we could not get admittance,* (excellent good fellows at Blackburn, say I!!)

but the people took the carriage to another house, where we were well received and very well entertained.

"Our next town was Bolton-le-Moors," continues Mr. Cobbett, and here we were again met at about two miles from the town *by an advanced guard*. A band of music was ready for us further on, and we entered Bolton amongst immense multitudes (?) of people. Being in uncertainty as to the time of our arrival, the band of music had been waiting for us nearly all night. *This circumstance, however, did not appear to have slackened the zeal of these most ardent and most grateful people. The great and general desire of both men and women was to shake hands with me. I put my arm over the side of the carriage and sometimes both arms together, and let them pull and squeeze my hands about just as they pleased, till my hands were sore from my wrists to the points of my fingers.** My right arm was so much pulled between Blackburn and Bolton, that I could not the next morning lift it up to tie on my cravat. We were very hospitably received at the Commercial Inn; I made a speech to the people, in which I told them *that I should set off in the evening, but that I should first get something to eat, and go to sleep on a bed*, in order to fetch up a little of the lost time, and to be ready for the future. In the evening I gave them another short speech, and then set off for Manchester."

At that place, owing to some recent circumstances, Mr. Cobbett wished to remain incog, but that was not to be expected could be allowed by the people of Manchester. "I was determined," says Cobbett, "to go on like a common traveller, and with this view I went to an inn called the Albion Hotel, where I arrived about eight or nine o'clock, but it was no sooner known that I was there, than a great

* This outrageous puff of Cobbett's did not escape the caricaturists of London, who drew "the great man" seated in a carriage, his arms extended right and left out of the window, like the projections of a clothes' horse, whilst a crowd of dirty urchins and wenches, drunken prostitutes and ragged ragamuffins are shaking his two hands; "the great man," bawling out "I am William Cobbett, the enlightener of the human race."

crowd collected round the house. I was tired and wished to go to bed, and lifting up the sash I told them, *that as there was no doubt I was the object of their curiosity, that curiosity should be gratified the next evening at about half past seven o'clock, when I should set off for London.* It was my intention to make a speech from one of the windows of the inn before my departure, but I heard that the police had sent word to the landlord of the inn, not to permit me to make a speech from one of the windows, on which I wrote to the boroughreeve and constables for an explanation, but I only received a verbal answer that if I attempted to speak I should be made answerable for the consequences. I was at once resolved upon coming away, without any attempt to speak, but at the same time I resolved to come openly from the front door, where I had alighted, to come away with my carriage open, and to let the boroughreeve and constables do what they pleased. As the time of my departure approached, the passage and hall and yard of the hotel began to be very much crowded with persons that I looked upon as being of a sort of ruffian gentility. At one time, a column of them wanted to crowd into our room. We put them out and guarded the door. We got into the carriage without any difficulty. *To see me was doubtless the principal object of this immense multitude,* and I must have been a most ungrateful and insensible man, indeed, not to have a strong desire to gratify this wish of so many people. While Mr. Clarke sat down, therefore, I jumped upon the seat of the carriage, stood there with my hat off, turning all about me, and repeating in a very loud voice "*Gentlemen, I thank you, God bless you all, laugh at the rotten lords.*" The concourse of people that accompanied us was immense. The general desire here *as elsewhere was to shake hands with me,* and though I had suffered so severely from this, the day before, *I could not withhold my hands, and had them pulled about again, till they were both black and sore.*"

We will give one more display of this gross egotism on the part of Cobbett, premising at the same time that in his

description of his departure from Preston, and of his subsequent journey on his route to London, every line of it so smacks of vanity and conceit, that the reader becomes surfeited with it *usque ad nauseam*. The account of Mr. Cobbett's abrupt departure from Manchester was published in the Morning Herald, and it is there described as being considered *inglorious* by his friends, many of whom were disappointed with his weak compliance with the unreasonable mandates of the authorities there. The account in the Herald closes with. "In what other town in England could a genteel rabble be found to elbow and jostle AN OLD MAN, a stranger in getting into his carriage."

"Now," says Cobbett, "the mere circumstance of age is trifling, but it is worth while to notice, that having been beaten in every other way, these reptile calumniators of mine, having been reduced to silence by these astonishing proofs of industry, sagacity, perseverance and resolution that I have displayed; the caitiffs having been absolutely abashed into silence by the very look of the public: now begin to comfort themselves with the thought THAT I AM A POOR OLD MAN, and that I cannot possibly last long. It is an OLD MAN, recollect, who can travel five hundred miles, make speeches of a half an hour long twice a day for a month, put down the saucy, the rich, the tyrannical; make them hang their heads in his presence; AN OLD MAN recollect that can be jostled out of his majority at an election, and that can return towards his home THROUGH FORTY MILES OF HUZZAS FROM THE LIPS OF A HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND PEOPLE!!! AN OLD MAN, let Thwaites of the Morning Herald recollect, who could catch him by one of those things, which he calls his legs and toss him over the fence from Piccadilly into the Green Park. AN OLD MAN that is not so ungrateful to God as to ascribe his vigour of body and of mind to his own merit, but certainly, who happens to know of no young man able to endure more hardships or perform more labour 'han himself."

The defeat at Preston was for a long time a rankling sore

in Cobbett's mind on every occasion, and he was not very scrupulous where he looked for them, he poured out his torrents of abuse on the sitting members, and all those, who had espoused their cause, in terms which in some instances would have disgraced the mouth of a Billingsgate fish-woman. This extreme coarseness and vulgarity injured Cobbett in the estimation of his friends, nor did it tend to advance the cause which he had espoused.

According to the promise which Mr. Cobbett made to his friends at Preston, he presented a petition to the House of Commons against the return, and the names of the recognizances were given in viz. Mr. Walker and Mr. James Thompson. In a letter which Cobbett wrote to the electors of Preston, he gives the following account of this singular transaction, commencing with informing them that the wishes of their hearts in seeing him in parliament, will not this time be accomplished. He then goes on to state, "I shall have to give an account of the conduct, and that too on the part of a man professing the sincerest of personal friendship, the purest of political principles, and the greatest anxiety for our success on this occasion. This man's name is JOSEPH THOMPSON. This man had introduced himself to me originally; the acquaintanceship began on his part; it commenced when I was in the King's Bench, and by an act on his part, which showed the best of feelings, and the best of principles. He *gave* me some money with the greatest of apologies *for the liberty he was taking*, but observing at the same time that as he thought the public in general ought to compensate me for the sufferings I endured for the sake of that public, *he at any rate, was determined to do his duty*. From that time I have known this man, was always happy to see him, went to see him as often as I could, got him to come to my house as often as I could prevail upon him to do it, was always very much pleased with his conduct upon all occasions; always thought him a singularly sound and sensible man.

"When, therefore, I had to nominate sureties, the first name that occurred to me, was that of my friend Mr. Walker, and the next was that of Mr. Thompson; *the first would*

have thought himself neglected and slighted if I had not put his name down, the latter was chosen in preference to one of twenty or fifty others, that I might have had, because he lived close by me ; because I knew Mr. Walker would be staying at my house ; because we should thus be all on the same spot, and be ready at any moment, and thus prevent the POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE.

“Thus by over precaution—yes, actually by taking *too great care* ; by having their surety under my own roof, as it were, all *your* hopes have been disappointed and all *my* labours thrown away.

Not to enter upon a full transcript of the whole of Cobbett's account of this transaction, it would appear, that an application was made to Mr. Thompson to become one of the sureties, and that he gave his consent accordingly, in the presence of a *barrister*, but who that barrister was, no information was given, and therefore we have nothing more to depend upon for the truth of the statement, than our great confidence in the veracity of Mr. Cobbett. As the time, however, approached for the sureties to enter into the recognizances, Mr. Thompson, it appears, had taken a different view of the matter, and declined becoming the surety at all, by which singular conduct, Cobbett was unable to prosecute his petition, as the time had elapsed, which by the rules of the House of Commons, the names of the sureties should be given in. Thus, if Mr. Cobbett could have procured *another friend*, his petition would not have been received by the house, and the electors of Preston lost the member, who had promised them, if he were elected, to do such things as no member of the House of Commons ever had done—ever contemplated to do, or ever could do.

That Cobbett was highly mortified at the loss of this election, was fully apparent in every Register which was published—the ranklings of a wounded mind exhibited themselves on every occasion, but still he attempted to make his readers believe, that he could have been returned, if he would have descended to the pernicious and unconstitutional practice of *giving the electors something to drink previously to voting*. “A hundred

pounds worth of ale would have secured my election," says Cobbett, "but I would rather not sit in parliament at all, than get into it by filling the bellies of my friends with a poisonous compound." No man had a happier knack of making the public believe, that he was perfectly resigned under whatever misfortune might befall him, than Cobbett evinced on every occasion in which he could put it forth. Whatever might have been at this time the opinion which Mr. Cobbett entertained of himself, and certainly no man stood higher in his opinion than William Cobbett himself. It is certain that his extraordinary vanity, his bloated egotism, and his insufferable conceit, had rendered him exceedingly obnoxious to the really sensible and well thinking part of the community; the castigations which he daily received through the medium of "*the broad sheets*," as he styled the newspapers, would have made any other being wince and writhe with pain; but on the back of Cobbett, however, they appeared to make no deeper impression than a drop of rain on the back of a goose. Of the many severe proofs which he received about this time of the public opinion towards him, the following may be considered as one of the most biting, and one which Cobbett himself never forgave.

"At a meeting held recently at the Fox and Goose, of the followers and admirers of Mr. W. Cobbett; SIR THOMAS SWALLOWALL in the chair, after a due and solemn consideration, it was *resolved unanimously*.

"That in the present awful crisis of public affairs, there appears to this meeting no other mode of saving the country from irretrievable disgrace and utter ruin, than that of placing at the head of the government, a man eminent for wisdom, virtue, great political sagacity, sound discretion and invincible courage.

"That from our own experience, and what must be more satisfactory on such a point, the often-repeated declarations of William Cobbett himself, there is not another man in the whole kingdom, who possesses both the ability and inclination to relieve the country, from the calamities with which it is now so unhappily burthened.

“ That although there are many apparently disinterested and able persons, who affect to doubt the prodigious advantages that would arise to the nation from the official services of Mr. W. Cobbett, it is manifest to this meeting, that Mr. Cobbett's description of these doubters, is a perfectly honest and correct one, namely, that they are a vile, selfish, corrupt, degenerate, base, and beastly set, in other words a band of miscreants and wretches, fit only to be cudgelled, despised, loathed, and spit upon, even worse than, according to the report of the said William Cobbett, Mr. Stanley was spitten upon by the pretty girls of Preston.

“ That the entire periodical press, with one single glorious exception, the REGISTER, conducted by Mr. W. Cobbett, is in the hands of a low, hired, profligate, ill-educated, ill-favoured, chocolate-cheeked, and ragged set of garret-inhabiting ruffians, whose opposition to Mr. William Cobbett arises solely from the worse than brutal envy of his superior talents and character, and the fear produced by his unrivalled exposures of their impotence, baseness, blackguardism, and knavery.

“ That therefore an humble address be prepared and presented to the king, earnestly beseeching his majesty, to lose no time in appointing Mr. William Cobbett prime minister, by which appointment his majesty may be assured the country will not only be saved from ruin, but that peace prosperity and glory will rapidly succeed to the frightful discord, universal sufferings, and unparalleled degradation, with which the nation is now tormented and oppressed—all, (as Mr. William Cobbett has so often publicly asserted, with a modesty and self-knowledge peculiarly his own) all arising from the wilful and deplorable neglect of Mr. W. Cobbett's re-iterated prophetic warnings and sagacious counsels.

(Signed) “ THOMAS SWALLOWALL, BART,
CHAIRMAN.”*

* Sir Thomas Bevor was at this time called Sir Thomas Swallowall, in allusion to the aptitude which he evinced of swallowing all the statements of Cobbett, and considering every thing as true and genuine, which appeared under the sanction of his name.

“While at the above meeting, Mr. W. Cobbett with his accustomed discretion and good taste, despatched a letter to Mr. Henry Hunt, offering to smother all political differences, and to forgive all personal scurrilities, however numerous and gross, that existed and had passed between them, solely for the good of the nation at this crisis, to form a junction with him, in order to unmask and oppose the shocking, shameful, preposterous, unprecedented, venal, and unnatural coalition that had just taken place between Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Canning, in despite of good faith, public decency and common consistency. It is said that Mr. Henry Hunt thought this letter at first to be a hoax, but being assured to the contrary by Mr. Cobbett’s messenger, as well as by a little reflection upon the conduct often before adopted by that great patriot *on certain perplexing occasions*, Mr. Henry Hunt, actuated by a spirit equally dignified, discreet, and disinterested, promptly acceded to the offer, and forthwith repaired to the Fox and Goose, where he was most graciously received by Mr. W. Cobbett and the chairman. The interview between the two worthies is described as having been inconceivably novel and touching, vows of friendship were renewed, not a word was hinted of the past, all was harmonious, gentlemanly, dignified, and a writing was immediately drawn up by the high contracting parties to be despatched to the Morning Herald broad sheet, announcing *this* coalition as the only junction calculated to expose inconsistency, confound hypocrisy, frustrate knavery, uphold the character of public men, satisfy the people, and save the country. Sir Thomas Swallowall, and the meeting in general were in raptures at this blessed re-union. Burdett, Brougham, Hume, &c. were loudly denounced as incapables, impostors, and apostates, and the walls of the Fox and the Goose resounded with cries of William Cobbett, and Henry Hunt for ever!!”——

It must be stated that the foregoing pungent satire, took its rise on account of a public meeting, which was convened to take place in Covent Garden, for the purpose of addressing the king on some recent ministerial changes, and thanking

him for the firmness he had displayed in the use of his prerogative. It was on this occasion that a coalition took place between Mr. Cobbett and Mr. Hunt, who for some time previously had been exhausting the English language of all its opportunities epithets, wherewith to bespatter one another, but when at this meeting were seen together in one of Mr. Hunt's backing vans, much to the surprise and amusement of the people. — Mr. Hunt and I," said Mr. Cobbett "may and have differed on *minor* points, but we have always agreed on *great* questions, and further, when *bad* men conspire, *good* men rise." Dr. Tucker, who was in the chair, declared that the people had only to cast their eyes to the *good* men, who were in the van, to confirm the truth of that statement, in which opinion he was seconded by Mr. Pitt of the Adelphi, who closed his eulogium on the *goodness* of the people by which he was surrounded, by intimating that some light-fingered gentleman, not having the fear of Botany Bay before his eyes, had just eased him of his watch, chain and seals, and if he would be so good as to bring them back to him, he would give him £5 reward.

That Cobbett was falling in the good opinion of the people was too evident at almost all the public meetings which he attended, but his conduct on the occasion of the dinner at the Crown and Anchor, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Sir Francis Burdett's election, was well calculated to expedite his fall, and if conviction could have been impressed on his mind, he must have felt that his influence was strongly on the wane, and that the people did not entertain that high opinion of him, which he informed them in his Register, that he knew they had, and which to his knowledge was daily and hourly increasing.

This dinner was attended by almost all the great political characters of the day, professing liberal principles, and when Sir Francis Burdett, the chairman, rose to give the toast "A full, fair, and free representation of the people in parliament, the only efficient remedy for all our national grievances," Mr. Cobbett rose to propose an amendment, and an uproar

immediately commenced, such as was never heard before at a public dinner. The room resounded with cries of "off, off" "Turn him out," "Turn him out." Several of the stewards expostulated with Mr. Cobbett, and a disposition was manifested to get rid of his interruption by main force. This provoked the resistance of his personal friends, who gathered round him, and in the conflict, some blows were interchanged. Two constables were introduced, who took their places by the side of Mr. Cobbett; all was confusion and uproar. Mr. Galloway at length obtained silence, and called on the assembly, in the name of the stewards, to hear the *gentleman*. They lost a great deal more by opposing him, than they would do, if they allowed him to proceed.

Mr. Cobbett then proceeded to suggest his amendment to the toast, "That his majesty be respectfully, but earnestly solicited, speedily to chase from his counsels, and strip of his confidence those men, who have undisguisedly declared, that they will never consent to reform in any shape whatever. I call upon this meeting," said Mr. Cobbett "to receive this amendment, I say that unless you petition the king to remove that immortal, implacable, and defalcating enemy of reform Mr. Canning, you are acting inconsistent with yourselves." The noise continuing to increase, Mr. Cobbett's voice was entirely drowned. A toast was then called from the chair, but under the most violent demonstrations of protest from Mr. Cobbett, who swung his body about, lifted his hands in deprecation, laughed hysterically, and seemed to be writhing with impatience. At length, apparently exhausted with his own futile efforts to be heard, he sat down, upon which a general shout was raised.

On Mr. Sturch rising to propose the health of Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Cobbett again arose, vociferating No, no, and flourishing his arms about in the most extraordinary manner. A great commotion took place in that part of the room where Mr. Cobbett was stationed, and some movements took place indicative of a determination to eject Mr. Cobbett from the room.

Sir Francis Burdett mounted the table to return thanks, but Mr. Cobbett again interfered, and demanded that his amendment should be put. Sir Francis on this resumed his seat. "What!" exclaimed Cobbett, "hear him, a traitor in the cause of the people. They are afraid to put the question—by G—d they are." He then proposed an amendment, "That Sir Francis Burdett now sits at the back of Mr. Canning, which Mr. Canning before the face of Sir Francis Burdett, has positively declared that he will oppose parliamentary reform to the last hour of his parliamentary existence, in whatever shape it may appear; that same Mr. Canning, who has always been the determined enemy of reform, and who has announced himself its implacable enemy."

In the midst of the confusion occasioned by putting the toast of Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Cobbett declared by G—d, that not one out of ten was in favour of the vote to Sir Francis Burdett. "Let them," he said, "submit it to a show of hands. They are afraid, by G—d. I now understand that Burdett says I have written nonsense. He is a pretty fellow to say I have written nonsense. *That at least will not be believed of me.*" Here Sir Francis arose and Mr. Cobbett was at length induced to take his seat, exclaiming, "Oh! I would not interrupt the finest speech in the world. Ha! ha! ha!"

On Lord William Russell rising to propose the health of John Cam Hobhouse, Esq. that gentleman and Mr. Cobbett rose at the same time, and the cries of "Hobhouse, Hobhouse," and "Cobbett, Cobbett," resounded through the room. Mr. Hobhouse stood as if patiently determined to obtain a hearing, Mr. Cobbett appeared equally resolved. He placed his hands in his waistcoat pockets, he bent his arms akimbo, lolled forth his tongue, gnashed his teeth, and by other significant motions gave the company distinctly to understand, that he was not at all pleased with the opposition which he experienced.

The scene which now took place is past all description.

Mr. Hobhouse appeared still endeavouring to obtain a hearing, but the screaming, howling, and hissing on the one hand, and the cheers and clapping of hands on the other were almost deafening. The stewards rushed to the table upon which Cobbett stood, speaking at the utmost pitch of his voice to those around him. They pressed upon him and his friends, and endeavoured to force him from the table. A scuffle ensued, in which Mr. Cobbett's friends defended him stoutly, and surrounding a corner in which he had placed himself, they resisted all attempts to come near him. Many white wands were broken, and many thumps and pushes were exchanged in the scuffle, chairs were upset, glasses and decanters demolished, and many were prevented, by the spilling of their wine, from becoming more inclined for a Tom and Jerry row. Mr. Cobbett in his addresses to those around him, frequently mentioned the name of Mr. Hobhouse, coupled with some offensive epithets, one of which, when Mr. Cobbett called him "My dear little Sancho", so exasperated Mr. Hobhouse, that he snatched a wand from the hands of one of the stewards, and going up to the place where Mr. Cobbett stood, swore he would knock him down if he repeated his abuse of him, telling him at the same time, that he held him unworthy of any gentleman's chastisement, and that nothing would induce him to look upon such a miscreant as he was, in the light of a political opponent.

During this very disgraceful scene the chairman and the gentlemen around him had taken their hats, and were about to depart, but again resumed their seats.

Nothing could equal the Billingsgate language which was used upon this occasion. "Go to h—," said Mr. Cobbett's friends. "Oh! you old bone-grubber, why dont you pay Sir Francis Burdett his £3000," said one of the adverse party. "You wanted to make money of the bones," cried another, and then "the lie," and the more coarse expressions which usually flow in other places, were used in abundance here. In the midst of this confusion, Mr. Hobhouse repeatedly presented himself, and uttered a few sentences with a view

to obtain a hearing, but they were completely drowned in the uproar which prevailed.

Sir Francis Burdett again appeared upon the table, and as chairman of the meeting, called upon them to perserve order. The call, however, appeared to be unanswered; the most riotous confusion still prevailed, and at the end of a very warm altercation in Mr. Cobbett's corner, he was observed to get upon the table, with his waistcoat somewhat disordered, and his countenance exhibiting marks of ill-suppressed irritation. The remainder of the meeting was one continued scene of uproar and contention; several of the most eminent leaders of the reform party attempted to speak, but little could be gathered of what they said, and the meeting was at length broken up, after a series of scenes disgraceful in the extreme, and excessively injurious to the character of Mr. Cobbett. Nevertheless, in his Register of the 26th May, it is truly laughable to see the style and manner in which Cobbett dresses up this affair. In his own opinion, he was the hero of the day; nothing was able to stand against the undaunted courage which he displayed. In comparison to him, Mr. Hobhouse was a cypher, Lord John Russell a fool, Lord Nugent a *great taptub*, and Sir Francis Burdett a wriggling, twisting, shuffling, whimpering, canting, political culprit. So great also was his influence over a certain portion of the meeting, that had it not been for his intersernce, Sir Francis Burdett would have been sent out of the window, and Mr. Hobhouse and the whole tribe of noblemen and gentlemen after him, leaving him, William Cobbett, the lord paramount of the assembly.

This bombast and rodomontade which disfigured the pages of the Register, might have been all very satisfactory and pleasing to the self-love and vanity of Cobbett, but it was admitted by the majority of his friends, that his conduct at that meeting alienated from him the good opinion of many, and was a prelude to that decline in the scale of respectability, which he had hitherto endeavoured to maintain.

The pecuniary affairs of Mr. Cobbett were also at this time

known to be in a deranged state, for although his Register continued to be a source of considerable profit to him, yet he was continually harrassed by the creditors, to whom he was indebted previously to his embarkation for America, and the only method which was left for him to extricate himself from his embarrassments was to declare himself insolvent. He had at this time, to the surprise of all his friends, and of the public in general, entered upon a line of business, as strange as it was new to him, for although he had employed himself during the whole of his life in *cutting up* the characters of both his friends and enemies, they little thought to see him in a shop at Kensington, in the character of a butcher, *cutting up* the carcasses of pigs, sheep, and oxen. Such, however, was now the case; many who had never seen William Cobbett, had now only to take a ride or a walk to Kensington and the "great man" might be seen, particularly early in the morning, examining the excellence of his carcasses, and wondering at the same time, that the whole town of Kensington and its vicinity, did not give his shop the preference above every other of the same description, with which the place abounded. But of all the places in the vicinity of London, Cobbett, perhaps, could not have selected one more unsuitable for him than the town of Kensington. He was in the very midst of the atmosphere of courts and palaces; he was surrounded by the followers and dependants upon royal patronage; the royal arms stood prominently displayed over a number of shops, indicating that the owners thereof were in the enjoyment of the peculiar privilege of serving royalty with the respective articles of their trade. And was this a place in which William Cobbett could locate himself with any chance of success, the sound of whose very name was as grating to the ears of royalty as a cracked bagpipe, and whose presence was shunned by the neighbouring aristocrats, as if he were infected with the plague? In vain did Cobbett send forth his outrageous puffs of the cheapness and excellence of his meat; in vain did he tell the people of Kensington that they were bound to deal with him on the score of patriotism; in

vain did he tell the people in his Register, that although the adage might be true, that there were tricks in all trades, yet, it would be found, if they applied to his shop at Kensington, that they would be dealt with on an established principle of honour and fair dealing. The public either doubted this assertion, or had imbibed an opinion from some late transactions that had been made public, that William Cobbett, to use a homely phrase, was no honester than he ought to be. Let the cause, however, be what it may, the butcher's shop was a decided failure, and William Cobbett took his station in the Gazette, in the list of bankrupts, as butcher of Kensington.

On the whole, the spirit of trade appears at this time to have taken full possession of all the energies of William Cobbett, for his Register was now made the vehicle of puffing off the various articles which he had for sale, and it was only William Cobbett who could describe their good qualities in the way which he did. Not a Register now appeared, but a paragraph presented itself, commencing with "I have for sale such and such an article—the very best in all England." The range of these articles was astonishing, beginning with apple trees and running through the whole alphabet, stopping at tulip tree wood; and some idea of the manner in which Cobbett dressed up his recommendation of his articles, may be gathered from that exhibited on his announcing that "I have for sale *fifty-four* planks of tulip tree wood, and they are at my house at Kensington, where they may be seen on application to the gardener, at any hour between four in the morning and five in the afternoon. There is the *mark* on each plank expressing the *number of feet* which it contains. The marks were put on in America, and therefore are according to our old-fashioned English *kingly* measure, and not according to the grand and sublime IMPERIAL MEASURE, which being an *improvement of the age*, produced by *liberal principles*, the offspring of the *march of mind* guages, (in defiance of Bedlam) ales, metes oysters, and ascertains the length and width of shirting, by the beat of a pendulum in a heat of sixty-two degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer."

At the outset of this puff, Mr Cobbett finds that he had *fifty-four* planks, at the close of it, he finds that he has not half that number and therefore he advises gentlemen to lose no time in purchasing *all* that are left, for as one plank would make a table to dine twenty persons, and *only* at the cost of four pounds, five shillings, besides the great advantage of being able to keep it always as clean as a marble slab, he *confidently* expects not to have occasion to repeat this notice.

On the establishment at Kensington being broken up, Mr. Cobbett retired to Barn Elm Farm, whence he continued to send forth his Registers and his puffs, the latter of which were now taken up with his eulogiums on the merits of indian corn, and particularly of that sort which he had for sale, imported direct from America, as a proof of which, "I have for sale 50 barrels, made of oak staves, in which the corn was imported." In addition to the indian corn, "I have for sale a quantity of American seeds, of which I purpose to put complete assortments in boxes at the *moderate* price of £5 a box. It would, however, be necessary in purchasing the box, to purchase also my work, called the Woodlands, because opposite to the seed of the birch I shall say, see the Woodlands, paragraph 153. Then when I come to the Georgia bark, I shall say, see the Woodlands, paragraph 158." In this manner did Cobbett make one branch of his business dovetail in with another, although at the same time, the whole was carried on with such a dogmatical spirit, and so full of conceit and egotism, that it was at last said that Cobbett's puffs were the most relishing part of his Register.

Towards the close of the year 1828, Cobbett again rendered himself conspicuous, by *proposing himself* as a candidate for the place of common councilman for the Ward of Farringdon Without. On this occasion, also, did Cobbett and Hunt meet, both as candidates for the same office, and it was not the least curious part of the scene to hear two individuals be-praising and complimenting each other, when it was well known that scarcely a Register appeared in which Cobbett did not vent his scurrilous abuse upon Mr. Hunt, and the

latter seldom let slip an opportunity, in which he could expose and depreciate the character of Cobbett. Mr. Hunt was duly proposed and seconded as a candidate, but Mr. Cobbett informs us, *that he would not condescend to be nominated by any of the electors*, for the best of all reasons, that no one seemed disposed to undertake the task. The two radical candidates must, however, have been doubly bronzed to have endured the lacerations which were inflicted upon them by some of the rival candidates. From the beginning of the meeting to the end, it was one tissue of abuse uttered against Hunt and Cobbett, particularly by Messrs. Wood, Blackett, Figgins, and Galloway, at the same time it must be admitted, that the latter gentlemen received from the two sturdy radicals some heavy blows, which told with such precision, that to use Mr. Hunt's own phrase, "made their old rotten teeth almost drop out of their head." It is scarcely necessary to remark, that neither of the radicals was successful in his attempt to represent the Ward of Farringdon Without; indeed, Mr. Cobbett never went to the poll at all, and Mr. Hunt soon saw that he was no great favourite with the good people of that part of the city.

High intellectuality is generally accompanied with eccentricity of conduct, and to no one can that proposition be more aptly applied than to William Cobbett. It is well known that the emperor Paul of Russia sent a challenge to all the monarchs of Europe to meet them in single combat, and not less extraordinary was the challenge which William Cobbett sent forth at this time to the whole world, and which we are certain cannot be read without a laugh at the subject upon which Cobbett chose to challenge his countrymen, at the same time it lets us into the knowledge of the mode of life to which he thought proper to restrict his household. He begins his challenge as follows :

"The following propositions will be denied by nobody that does not covet a broomstick, that paleness is a sign of feebleness, if not of ill-health; that as soon as a body becomes dead, its cheeks are pale; that when a person, from whatever

cause, faints, the blood totally leaves the cheeks, and that in short, a pale face is a sure sign of a want of vigorous health. Now these premises being undeniable, I shall first state a fact, and then throw out my challenge. The fact is this, that during three months, or thereabouts, no wheat, or any thing proceeding from wheat, and no sort of thing usually obtained from a grocer, or in other words, no sort of thing which is not the produce of the soil of England, that none of these things have been consumed under the roof of my farm house. *Now then my challenge is this*, there are twelve of us under this roof, who live in the manner aforesaid, without wheat, or any thing proceeding from wheat, and without any thing not produced from the land in England. And I HEREBY OFFER TO BET ANY MAN ONE HUNDRED POUNDS, THAT HE DOES NOT FIND UNDER ANY ROOF, NAY, UNDER ANY SIX ROOFS, ANY TWELVE PERSONS THAT HAVE SO MANY SQUARE INCHES OF RED UPON THEIR CHEEKS, AS ARE TO BE FOUND BY DUE ADMEASUREMENT, UPON THE CHEEKS OF THE TWELVE WHO LIVE UNDER THIS ROOF, AND WHO FEED IN THE MANNER ABOVE SPOKEN OF. I have kept this farm house for more than a year without spirits, without sugar, tea, coffee, or any sort of grocery, without any of these ever having made their appearance under this roof; though observe, *I have never been without two women in the house.** These things I have done for more than a year, and no doctor or apothecary has ever set his foot within the doors of this farm house, during the whole of that time, though, let it be observed, I am the first to apply for medical assistance for any body in my house, in case of even the appearance of illness. But we have had no illness. The accursed tea has not been here to shake our nerves; and the brandied wine, and the vitrioled spirits, and the abominable brewer's poison have been kept away from under this roof, and we have been

* Cobbett does not inform us of the length of time these women stopped with him; we, however, know, that a month was a very long time for him to retain a female servant, and we heard one of his domestics says, that she would rather live with the d—l than with William Cobbett.

well, though close upon the border of a marshy meadow, which I was told would give us all agues and typhus fevers. Now, if people will not live as we live, let them be ill, say I, I have no pity for them, they are drunkards and gluttons, for drunkenness and gluttony are only things of degree. In short, if people will not restrain themselves from those indulgences, which cause sickness, sick they will be, and sick they ought to be."

This challenge was followed by another characteristic trait of Cobbett's mode of life, and we strongly recommend it to the attention of all the young, aye, and of all the old bachelors of the kingdom, not suspecting at the same time, that the advice which Cobbett gives them will be followed by one out of twenty, or that the regimen which he recommends would in the least reconcile the newly-married wife to the change in her condition.

TO YOUNG MEN, WHO HAVE THE LAUDABLE WISH TO
BE MARRIED.

"This," says Cobbett, "is a very important matter, I am therefore tempted to relate an anecdote, which will afford, *I am certain, great consolation* to many young persons of both sexes, who would feign obey the divine precept, increase and multiply; but who are deterred by the fears of not being able to obtain a livelihood after they have entered upon the holy work. Not long ago, two young gentlemen, who have genteel employments in London, dropped in upon me at my farm, about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Each had his gun, and *they had a pointer between them*. One of them I had known pretty nearly from his infancy, the other was a stranger to me. I asked the young man whom I knew, whether he was *married*; the answer was a congratulation to himself, that he was not; I inquired after another young fellow that I had known formerly; he was married, I was told, and great sorrow was expressed for the poor fellow. I appeared, as I really was, uneasy to a considerable degree, at hearing this sort of language from young men, and began

to fear that Malthus and Carlile had made great and general impression by their teaching. I found, however, that the great obstacle to matrimony was the fear of not being able to provide for the wife and family. While I was talking with these abstemious bachelors upon the subject, the maid came to lay my cloth for dinner, it being now within a few minutes of twelve o'clock, seeing *two gentlemen* with me, she drew back, held the cloth up to her body, and looked me very hard in the face, "Go on," said I "lay the cloth, and when you have put down the men's dinner, bring me a cut off their *joint*." My visitors rose, preparing to go away and not interrupt me at my dinner. I begged them to be seated, and to do me the pleasure of dining with me, which they seemed not to disrelish by any means, having probably had tea slops for their breakfast, and having had their appetite sharpened by coming from town on a fresh frosty morning, with guns in their hands, rambling backwards and forwards amongst the hedges and bushes. Dinner was quickly served. About four pounds, perhaps, of *solid fat bacon*, without one morsel of lean in it, but exquisitely good, rosy as a cherry, and transparent as glass. This was *the joint* of which they heard me speak; along with it came a pudding made of *corn* meal (indian corn) and mutton suet, a dish of Swedish turnips, boiled along with the bacon, as the pudding had also been, besides these, a loaf of bread, made partly of *rye* flour and partley of *corn* meal, and a full pot of fresh beer; thirty gallons made from a bushel of malt. We drew up to the table without my offering any apologies, seeming to look upon the dinner as a matter of course, being quite proper for me to invite them to take a part of, and without any ceremony I furnished their plates, which, by the by, as well as the dishes and beer mug, consisted of good solid pewter; to my agreeable surprise, they not only played a good knife and fork, but praised the victuals exceedingly. As soon as the repast was over, I told them that they now knew the grand secret of being able to *marry with safety*, for that, if they, as they might, if they would live just in that manner, and no other, and avoid the accursed

tea and all its accompaniments, resolve to use nothing in the way of food or raiment, which the land of England did not produce, each of them might marry to-morrow, and with their incomes, might each save fortunes for their children. There were we four, (including my clerk, or secretary of state,) who had dined upon about one pound of bacon, about a pound and a half of pudding, a pound of bread, twopennyworth of beer, and a farthing's worth of Swedish turnips, making altogether elevenpence farthing, or less than threepence a piece. Now a young fellow will be married for some time before he will get four full grown sets of teeth at work upon his *joint of meat*. His breakfasts would be monstrous indeed, if they exceeded the dinner in expence, and as to the suppers, a pennyworth of bread and cheese, and a halfpennyworth of beer, is as much as any body can think of. Allow then, three pence for the dinner, two pence for the breakfast, and three halfpence for the supper, that makes sixpence halfpenny a day, or three shillings and nine pence halfpenny a week for one individual, or seven shillings and seven pence a week for MAN and WIFE. Go on, young fellow, *have as many children as your wife pleases*; they will amount to ten in number, before the victuals and drink need cost you more than twenty shillings a week, but if you will insist in dealing in *exotic* articles, if you will insist upon having the tea tackle, and the wine decanters, and all the rest of that ruinous and ridiculous and contemptible set, resolve at the same time not to marry, for the consequence must be a life of uneasiness to yourself, a termination of it in the King's Bench, or in some jail, or some workhouse; and at the very best, a shifting and shuffling along through life, always dependant upon some haughty scoundrel or other, and being in fact a miserable slave and a hungry slave into the bargain, with the fair chance of leaving behind you a bevy of daughters to become prostitutes, and a pack of sons to become toadeaters of the vilest and most odious of the aristocracy. I remember that after Fox got into place in 1806, *I said that could he have lived upon bread and cheese and small beer, he would have been a great man*. I said this

in the Register. I have often thought of it since. For the want of money, which want was created by his luxurious and extravagant living, Fox became, and remained all his life, the tool of the boroughmongers, who furnished him with money, and for whom, and whose vile and corrupt interests he worked as steadily as ever a journeyman worked for his weekly pay."

On the 10th April, 1830, Mr. Cobbett sent forth his modest address to his political friends, the principal aim of which was to set on foot a subscription in all the counties of England, for the purpose of purchasing for him an estate adequate to the qualification of *two* members, himself of course being one, and the other to be of his own nomination, thereby constituting, him to all intents and purposes, a boroughmonger. The sum requisite for the purchase of this qualification was according to his own calculation, about £10,000; *he had no objection, if it exceeded that sum*; and he gives the actual sums which each county was to raise. "*Two pounds each*," he says, "from every reader of the Register, *would about do the thing*. Forbearance from one single glass of grog for one market day, on the part of each farmer, *would do the thing*."

How fully and unequivocally does the character of Cobbett peep out in the following method which he lays down for the raising of this £10,000, which he considered could be done *immediately, if set about in the proper manner*, and therefore he says, "My friends should *write to me as soon as possible*, at No. 183 Fleet-street, *postage paid*, authorizing me to say, that *they will be collectors*; that I should *then publish their names*; that they should, if they choose, appoint some one of themselves to receive their various collections, and that *when the sum is completed for the county, say £790 for Middlesex, £770 for Lancashire, Nottinghamshire £350, and so on, IT SHALL BE TRANSMITTED TO ME, and my receipt of it to be published*. If any gentleman chooses to subscribe singly, he may do it at Fleet-street, where a book

will be kept for the purpose, or he may do it by *letter to me*, paying the postage."

This speculation was a decided failure, and if Cobbett had had the courage or the candour to own it, he would have confessed at once, that he was mistaken in the opinion which he held, of the wishes of the people of England to see him in parliament. In the Register of the 1st May; he gives the names of seven individuals, who were willing to receive subscriptions, and at the close acknowledges the receipt of £12 2s. for Middlesex, £10 for Herefordshire, and £5 for Northamptonshire, making the sum total of £27 2s. towards the £10,000. Here, however, the subscription must have stopped, for we find no further announcements of receipts, and therefore *we suppose the sums subscribed were returned to the subscribers*. On further examination, however, we find the subscribers were *anonymous*, and therefore no fault could be imputed to, Mr. Cobbett that the money was not returned.

In this address of Mr. Cobbett to his political friends, we meet with some very interesting particulars concerning his life, which cannot pass unnoticed. Speaking of Sir Francis Burdett, he says, "For seven long years I was his sole prop. A good large volume would not, put all together, contain the facts that I collected for him, the notes that I made for his speeches, the various things that I wrote to uphold him. Two particularly I must mention. His sensible speech on the currency, recorded in Paper against Gold, *I wrote out for him*, and then published and praised it *as his*, which was indeed my constant practice. In 1812 he made a grand stroke, he moved the answer to the king's speech, or rather the regent's, and made a long speech, which brought plaudits from every part of the country. **I WROTE THE ANSWER AND THE SPEECH**, and the former was copied by his own daughter, that my hand might not appear, and that the secret should not become public. Nay, these were published in a pamphlet by *subscription*, and I was myself the greatest subscriber. Shame, indeed, would it be to relate this, but good

God ! what has he not endeavoured to do to me. What has he left undone that he thought had a tendency to destroy my character, to destroy the effect of my herculean labours, and to entail upon my virtuous wife and children, the ruin of their kind, disinterested, zealous, and generous, and above all things, their beloved husband and father.

But I wrote him a letter from America, containing an assertion that a man against whom ruinous laws had been singly pointed, was by the laws of nations exonerated from obligations by which men, not so singled out were bound ; but at the same time saying, that I would not avail myself of that principle, but would pay every one (though out of the reach of creditors,*) as fast as I could earn the money. The ungrateful fellow, keeping the letter out of sight, published an answer to it, misrepresenting its meaning. I sent a copy of the same letter to my friend, Mr. Timothy Brown, to whom I owed a good deal. Did *he* cavil at it ? He hastened to me on my arrival in London, though then bandaged up for the gout, took me to his house ; brought on my bankruptcy in the most friendly manner, cherished me to the last hour of his virtuous life, and has left his memory engraven on a heart which has never been wanting in gratitude. I wrote the same letter to Mr. Tipper, a paper merchant, to whom I really owed £3000, and with whom I was but very slenderly acquainted. Without a farthing of dividend, (for I had not a penny,) he signed my certificate at the first possible moment, and he or Mr. Brown, I forget which, *actually gave me a pound note and a few shillings*, that I might, for form's sake, have something to surrender to the commissioners, and I must do those commissioners the justice to say, that they, seeing a great crowd in Guildhall *staring at me*, behaved towards me in a manner, that showed the best of

* Mr. Cobbett is here in an error, he was not out of the reach of his creditors ; the Atlantic was, it is true, between them and him, but a month or six weeks would have been sufficient to carry a power of attorney across it, which would soon have enforced the payment of the debt, or deprived him of every particle of property.

feelings, put no questions to me, dismissed me in a minute, and very kindly shook me by the hand when I went away.

“In January 1821, my family, after having for years been scattered about like a covey of partridges, that had been sprung and shot at, got once more together, in a hired lodging at Brompton, and our delight and our mutual caresses, and our tears of joy, experienced no abatement at our actually finding ourselves WITH ONLY THREE SHILLINGS IN THE WHOLE WORLD, and at my having to borrow from a friend the money to pay for the paper and print of the then next Saturday’s Register. All that I possessed worth speaking of consisted of the copyrights of my books. They are valuable; that of my English Grammar* *was given up to help to pay my debts*, but I have earned it back, and actually paid 1200 SOVEREIGNS for it several years ago. *These copyrights I have given to my children*,† their generous mother being quite willing that it should be done. All I can yet earn is due to them, and more especially to her, and there is no one, whose heart is not like that of Burdett, who will not say, that not one single shilling of those earnings ought to be withdrawn from them—On this account, therefore, as I have during the whole of my life fought the battle of the people of England, the same people must return me to parliament at their expence, for not a shilling of my own will I spend in the business.

It will no doubt be in the recollection of our readers, that

* It is well known that “The English Grammar” was one of the most favourite books of Cobbett’s genius, but at the same time, it is equally well known, that he far over-rated its excellences. It was never received as a class book, and as a guide to the philological student, it cannot be considered as one worthy of adoption. We do not believe that a publisher can be found, who would give a twelfth part of the sum, mentioed by Cobbett for the copyright of it.

† Mr. Cobbett might have given the copyrights to his children *for his life time*, but at his death, unless previously properly and legally assigned for the usual term of the copyright act they become the property of the public. We speak advisedly when we say, that not one of Mr. Cobbett’s children could maintain an action for the piracy, or even the entire re-publication of any of ~~these~~ works the copyright of which was given to them by their father.

in the course of the year 1830, a great number of incendiary fires broke out in almost every part of England. There were numerous causes assigned for this unequivocal demonstration of popular discontent, such as agricultural distress—a desire to expedite the progress of a reform in the constitution. Whatever the cause might have been, is not a question that we can be expected to answer at this moment, and it is merely alluded to in reference to the part taken under the circumstances by Mr. Cobbett, and the result which it led to, namely, a trial for sedition, in having spoken somewhat too openly on the subject in his Political Register of December 11th 1830.

After a long and vexatious delay, Mr. Cobbett was tried on the 7th of July, 1831, in the court of King's Bench, Guildhall, before Lord Tenterden and a special jury, upon the prosecution of the Attorney General, Denman, for the publication of a seditious and malicious libel, tending to excite the agricultural labourers to acts of sedition, insurrection, arson, &c. This was, to say the least of it, a most indiscreet proceeding on the part of government. It gave to Mr. Cobbett an opportunity of animadverting upon their weak and wicked policy towards the agricultural labourers, and of indulging in a strain of irony and sarcasm, which he could not otherwise have had the opportunity of doing, their departure from those principles they had professed when in opposition, and upon the credit of which they had been borne into office.

This was an indictment against Mr. William Cobbett, charging him with the publication, on the 11th of December preceding, of a libel with intent to raise discontent in the minds of the labourers in husbandry, and to incite them to acts of violence, and to destroy corn, machinery, and other property—at least this was the language of the indictment, but to the charges therein preferred the defendant pleaded not guilty.

When he attended the court, attended by his sons, his attorney, and two friends, some persons in the gallery im-

mediately greeted him by clapping their hands, and, on proceeding to take his seat, they gave three loud huzzas. The defendant seemed highly gratified, and turning round and looking towards the gallery, said, "If truth prevails, we shall beat them."

The Attorney General, Deuman, then stated the case for the crown, adverting to the system of riot, fire-raising, and breaking machinery, which had spread destruction through so many counties in the end of the last, and the beginning of that year. It was, (he said) at this particular time, when special commissioners were issued for the investigation of crimes of this description, that the defendant published the number of the Weekly Political Register, on which the indictment was founded. The paper was ushered in with a heading taken from another paper by the same author, published on the 24th of October, 1815, in the following terms:—"At last, it will come to a question of actual starvation, or fighting for food; and when it comes to that point, I know that Englishmen will never lie down and die by hundreds by the way side."

Following up the idea in the motto, (continued the Attorney General) there was a paper called the Rural War, as if those unhappy persons were banded together to commit acts of violence, like troops carrying on a war against those who withheld from them provisions. Then the "Special Commission" came, as the next general title, and a letter appeared, addressed to those very people who were likely to be called upon to take their trials for the offences with which they were charged. The first paragraph related to the commission; then there was an observation about some clergyman, who had written a paper which had given great offence to Mr. Cobbett. Mr. Cobbett made some severe remarks, not only upon the conduct of the clergyman who published that paper, but on the conduct of the clergy in general. He also made some strong observations upon the title to tithes, with which it was not necessary for him, (the Attorney General) to trouble the jury. The particular paragraph to which he was bound to allude,

as seditious, was the following :—“ In the meantime, however, the parsons are reducing their tithes with a tolerable degree of alacrity ! It seems to come from them like drops of blood from the heart ; but it comes, and must all come, or England will never again know even the appearance of peace. ‘ Out of evil comes good.’ We are not, indeed upon that mere maxim ‘ to do evil that good may come from it.’ But without entering at present into the motives of the working people, it is unquestionable that their acts have produced good, and great good too. They have been always told, and they were told now, and by the very parson that I have quoted above, that their acts of violence, and particularly their burnings, can do them no good, but add to their wants, by destroying the food that they would have to eat. Alas ! they know better ; they know that one threshing machine takes wages from ten men ; and they also know that they should have none of this food, and that potatoes and salt do not burn ! therefore, this argument is not worth a straw. Besides, they see and feel that the good comes, and comes instantly too. They see that they get some bread in consequence of the destruction of part of the corn ; and while they see this, you attempt in vain to persuade them that that which they have done is wrong. And as to one effect, that of making the parsons reduce their tithes, it is hailed as a good by ninety-nine hundredths, even of men of considerable property ; while there is not a single man in the country who does not clearly trace the reduction to the acts of the labourers, and especially to the fires ; for it is the terror of these, and not the bodily force, that has prevailed. To attempt to persuade either farmers or labourers that the tithes do not do them any harm, is to combat plain common sense. They must know and they do know, that whatever is received by the parson is just so much taken from them, except that part which he may lay out for productive labour in the parish ; and that is a mere trifle compared with what he gives to the East and West Indies, to the wine countries, to the footmen, and to other unproductive labourers. In short, the tithe

owners take away from the agricultural parishes, a tenth part of the gross produce, which, in the present state of abuse of the institution, they apply to purposes not only not beneficial, but generally mischievous to the people of those parishes.

“In another passage,” continued the Attorney General, “the defendant expressed his opinion that the criminals ought not to be made to suffer for any thing they had done; and, speaking of the probability of some of them losing their lives, this language was used:—

“No; this will not be done. The course of these ill-used men had been so free from ferocity, so free from any thing like blood-mindedness! They have not been cruel, even to their most savage and insolent persecutors. The most violent thing that they have done to any person, has not amounted to an attempt on the life or limb of the party; and in no case but in self defence, except in the cases of the two hired overseers in Sussex, whom they merely trundled out of the carts which those hirelings had had constructed for them to draw like cattle. Had they been bloody, had they been cruel, then it would have been another matter; had they burnt people in their beds, which they might so easily have done; had they beaten people wantonly, which has always been in their power; had they done any of these things, then there would have been some plea for severity. But they have been guilty of none of these things; they have done desperate things, but they were driven to desperation; all men, except the infamous stock-jobbing race, say, and loudly say, that their object is just; that they ought to have that for which they are striving; and all men except that same hellish crew, say that they had no other means of obtaining it.”

The Attorney General said, after reading these passages, that he should think it a waste of time, if he pursued the argument further. He could not conceive that there would be a doubt in any reasonable, unbiassed mind, that there was a tendency not to be mistaken—an inference of an intention not to be resisted—with regard to the conduct which these

persons were taught to pursue, by a reference to the success of those offences which they had committed. What was the tendency of all these things? to excite a suffering people, but at all events a people whose minds were inflamed to a repetition of crime.

The publication of the libel complained of having been proved,

Mr. Cobbett addressed the jury in a long speech, arguing against the criminal intent and tendency imputed in the indictment to the publication, but principally employing himself in an exposure of the government which had prosecuted him and more especially the Attorney General. He referred to the language which had been held regarding him in parliament, and complained that his trial had been going on there since the beginning of the session, one member after another "falsely, maliciously, and scandalously," imputing to him, his lectures, and publications, the crimes which had been committed in the agricultural counties. He next alluded to "the vast affection which our present whig government entertain for the liberty of the press. They never proceed by information! O, no; and then their Attorney General, Sir Thomas Denman, he also had a particular affection for the liberty of the press." O yes, Denman was an honest fellow, and would not, on any account, touch the liberty of the press. Yet it so happened that their whig government, with their whig Attorney General, had carried on more state prosecutions during the seven months that they had been in office, than their tory predecessors had in seven years. The tories—the haughty and insulting tories—showed their teeth to be sure, but they did not venture to bite. Not so with the whigs. If they should happen to remain in office a twelvemonth, all the gaols in the kingdom must be enlarged, for they would not contain room for the victims of this whig government. The government itself, he (Mr. Cobbett) maintained, and its organs, were now the most atrocious of all libellers. Their newspapers libelled right and left—but libelled on their own side, and therefore were allowed to libel with impunity. He

referred to the abuse which the Times (then a whig paper), for instance, was every day pouring on the House of Commons, not only with the tendency, but with the loudly proclaimed purpose of bringing that branch of the legislature into utter horror and contempt. Did Sir Thomas Denman prosecute? No, no, That was his side—and instead of prosecuting, when Sir R. Inglis, brought the Times before the house, he maintained that the libel was true, and should be passed over. Not even the judges had escaped. Not two months before, the Times put forth, that Mr. William Brougham, a candidate for Southwark, said to the electors, in regard to the Reform Bill, " Among the devices to defeat the measures of ministers, a canvass is going on by the judges of the land, who have degraded themselves and their station." This was pretty well, coming from a brother of the Lord Chancellor, the first judge in the country. Then came the Times—a paper in close connection with the government, and after stating that the dignified neutrality which the judges had observed since the last days of Charles, were now at an end, added: " These judges expect a reformed parliament to ask, why they should receive £5,500 a year each, these hard times:" thus imputing to those learned personages the basest motives.

Next day the Courier, the heir-loom of all administrations, saying that there had been a total disregard of decency on the part of the judges; that such men were not fit to preside on trials of a political nature; and then they asked, " What chance has a reformer, if he be tried before one of these judges? How is he to expect a fair trial? We almost wish that the judges did not hold their office for life!"

Then came on the Morning Chronicle, stating that the conduct of Mr. Justice Park, who was one of the judges who had acted so shamefully, was to be made the subject of some parliamentary proceedings, perhaps even some motion of an impeachment. As the Attorney General had taken notice of the observations of the judges—as he had left them to defend themselves, to puff off themselves, and to pay for news-

paper paragraphs if they pleased—he ought to have called upon him to answer for what he had published. There was a person who had written, “Down with kings, lords and priests.” That person entitled his paper *The Republican*, and his advice to the people was to put down kings, lords, and priests. The Attorney General had said in parliament, that he thought it better to leave such things to the good sense of the people. Then why did he not leave his publication to the good sense of the people? Was this partial selection to be endured? Would the jury allow themselves to be degraded into the mean tools of such foul play? The Attorney General himself, might recollect the circumstance of a person, who was never a hundred miles distant from Sir Thomas Denman, comparing the late king to Nero, and calling the present king a “royal slanderer.” But all these things were nothing; you might publish as many libels as you chose, but only don’t touch the faction. “That,” continued Mr. Cobbett, “is my whole offence. For years I have been labouring to lop off useless places and pensions, and that touches the faction. These whigs, who have been out of office for five-and-twenty years—these lank whigs—lank and merciless as a hungry wolf—are now filling their purses with the public money, and I must be crushed, and to-day, gentlemen, they will crush me unless you stand between me and them.”

“In regard to the tendency of the publication,” said Mr. Cobbett, “the indictment charged that he published, contriving and intending to incite the labourers in husbandry to outrages—to various acts of violence, by breaking of machinery and setting fires. Now the jury must be satisfied, not from what was set out in the indictment, containing, as it did, garbled extracts, but they must be satisfied from the whole context—from the whole scope and tenour of the article—that the intention was that which the indictment charged it to be, before they could find a verdict of guilty. They had a right to look, not only to what was stated in other parts of the publication, but even to other writings of his. The Attorney General knew this—somebody had taught him

law enough to know, that if he set forth in the indictment the whole of the publication, he would at once burn his fingers. The jury must be satisfied that he (Mr. Cobbett) put forth this publication for the purpose of inciting the labourers to do that which was charged in the indictment; that was 'to set fire to ricks, to pull down machinery, and so to commit outrages.' "

The defendant then proceeded to comment on the article, and to read several other passages, which had not been set out in the indictment, and he argued that the tendency of the whole article was the reverse of that which had been ascribed to it by the Attorney General, and which the partial extracts might lead some persons to suppose. He said in one passage, that "out of evil came good." But was that evil? But he had also said, that he did not wish people to do evil that good might come from it. Having cautioned them against any such conclusion, he went on to say that the outrages had done good, and he gave his reason for that; but it did not follow, because he thought good had arisen, that he approved of evil; much less that he intended to incite the people to commit them, when he said just the contrary. Would the jury find a false, perfidious whig, who would not tell them that the revolution was a glorious revolution, and yet it was the overturning of a king, and the downfall of his dynasty? A flash of lightning which set fire to a barn or a rick, might do much good. This trial would do a great deal of good; it had done a great deal already, as it had enabled him in the presence and hearing of this great audience, to cast off those vile ~~standers~~ ^{standards} which had been circulated against him. In one of the articles there was a petition to parliament signed by himself. The jury would take that petition and read it, for they were bound to take the whole publication together, and judge of its effects accordingly. In that petition he stated the case of the wretched labourers, their sufferings, and the causes of those sufferings. In that petition he had defended the farmers, and showed it was not they, who were in fault. How then could it be the tendency of the publication to stir up the labourers to destroy the property of the farmers, when it showed that it was not they

who had caused the distress? Nay, it even referred to Lord Melbourne's circular, a document of a conciliatory nature, and the only one of that character which had emanated from the whigs; it had referred to that circular to show the labourers that they need not despair, as the government sympathized with their sufferings, and directed its attention to the causes of them; yet now it was contended that this object was to incite them to the acts of violence.

He now came, he said, to the great and obvious object of the article, and he would put it to the jury; when they should have carefully read it all through, whether they could entertain the slightest doubt that his object was, to save the lives of those who were convicted under the special commission. When that commission went out, he anticipated great shedding of blood, and he therefore felt himself called upon to endeavour to prevent it. Now let the jury read the article in question from beginning to end, and say whether they could possibly come to any other conclusion, than that it was written for the express purpose of preventing blood from being shed. Let that fact then be bore in mind. Now the object being to save the lives of these unfortunate men, was it possible to suppose that he (Mr. Cobbett) would incite them to acts of outrage, which would of course be the means of defeating its object? He repeated that his only object was to save the lives of these men, and for that purpose he had availed himself of the licence allowed by Paley, and had recourse to every means in his power to accomplish his object; he had invited all parts of the country, the parishes of the metropolis, to petition on this behalf. Such was his object; such the tendency of the article for which this foul, malicious, scandalous and wicked indictment had been preferred against him.

The defendant here read over various parts of the publication containing the alleged libel, and again put it to the jury whether it was possible to come to any other conclusion, than that his object in publishing it was what he now stated; and if so, then he was perfectly satisfied that they would pronounce

him not guilty, although he admitted that in so doing they would at the same time be pronouncing a verdict of guilty on this whig government. Mr. Cobbett now referred to his other publications, such as "Rural Economy," to show that he was an encourager of the solid and peaceful comforts of the labourer, not an instigator to crimes; and told the jury that he would give them, to that effect, the evidence of no less a man than the Lord Chancellor of this very whig government.

In the year 1816, he (Mr. Cobbett) had published a letter to the Luddites in Nottinghamshire. Towards the close of the last year, the Lord Chancellor applied to him for leave to re-publish that letter, in a work called the "Library of Useful Knowledge," in order that it might be circulated amongst the very labourers whom he (the defendant) was now charged with inciting to acts of violence. What times were these! Would the Lord Chancellor come to Cobbett's sedition shop to get something wherewith to quiet the labourers? Nay, the Attorney General himself was another member of the same society that wished to publish his letter. When the Lord Chancellor made the application, he asked, at the same time, on what terms I would consent to the re-publication? Now, I disliked the use of the word "terms," but I replied I would consent to its being re-published on this condition, that it should be published altogether, and not garbled by extracting any portions of it, because I would not allow those parts which set forth the rights of the labourer to be left out, whilst all that was calculated to throw censure upon the violence which their wrongs had goaded them on to commit should go forth to the world. Upon this condition I gave my consent to the re-publication, and lent him a copy of the book. By so doing the learned judge will tell you I re-published the letter. I do not know what the Lord Chancellor did with it, but I shall ask him by and by, as I intend to put him into the box. What then has the Lord Chancellor done? As an author, he takes my book to re-publish; As Lord Chancellor

he applies to his colleague, with whom "he had stood together in their chivalry," to institute a proceeding against me, to punish me as the author of a libel, calculated to excite the labourers to outrage and disorder. Here then is the Lord Chancellor in November borrowing my book, in the next month prosecuting me for a libel, and a false, malicious, and seditious person, to be robbed of property, and of life too, if the whigs were to have the power of causing it. I have lived twenty-one years under a tory administration, and under six tory Attorney Generals, but have never been prosecuted, although, if the present be considered a libel, I have written plenty of a similar description. The country has been ruled with rods by the tories, but the whigs scourged them with scorpions."

The defendant concluded by declaring, that whatever might be the verdict of the jury, if he were doomed to spend his last breath in a dungeon, he would pray to God to bless his country; he would curse the whigs, and leave his revenge to his children and the labourers of England.

Mr. Cobbett then sat down amidst loud demonstrations of applause by numerous persons, which the officers with difficulty suppressed.

Mr. Cobbett.—I will thank your lordship to let Henry Brougham be called—Lord Brougham then entered the court from the judge's private room, and was sworn by the officer of the court.

Mr. Cobbett.—Does your lordship recollect ever applying to me for a copy of my letter, addressed to the Luddites against the breaking of machinery?

Lord Brougham—I recollect making some application, I believe through the secretary to a society to which I belong, for a copy of a paper written by you some years ago, the date of which we could not recollect, and also applying for permission to make use of it by re-publication. I have no recollection of the mode of application; it is possible I applied through the medium of your son. I think I had some intercourse with your son, respecting his admission to Lincoln's-inn.

A letter was handed to his lordship, who admitted it to be in his hand-writing. It was read as follows,

“DEAR SIR,

“Though I could not attend myself at the bench when you called, being engaged in the House of Lords, I took care all should be done correctly. I want you to ask your father about the date of a letter he has written against the breaking of machinery, as a society with which I am connected is working on the same grounds, and he might, perhaps, on proper terms, give us the benefit of his labour.”

Lord Melbourne was then called and sworn.

Mr. Cobbett.—Does your Lordship recollect a man named Thomas Goodwin, who was sentenced to suffer death?

Lord Melbourne.—Yes.

Mr. Cobbett.—Upon what grounds did he receive his majesty's pardon?

The Attorney General objected to so irregular an inquiry, and the Lord Chief Justice decided that such a question could not be put.

Mr. Cobbett said, as that was his lordship's opinion, he had no further questions to put to this witness.

Lord Radnor sworn and examined by Mr. Cobbett. Had known him (the defendant) upwards of thirty years, and, during that period, had been a constant reader of his writings. From what he (witness) had seen of him, and read of his works, he did not think he was a person likely to excite the working classes to outrage against their masters, or any one else, but quite the reverse.

The examination of this witness having closed the defendant's case,

Lord Tenderden, in summing up the evidence, stated that the language of the article in question seemed certainly strongly calculated to affect the purpose charged against the defendant, but that was a question exclusively for the jury.

The jury retired about a quarter past six o'clock, and shortly

afterwards his lordship retired to his private room. After sending to inquire two or three times, if the jury were likely to agree, and being answered in the negative, his lordship left the court at half-past nine o'clock. About one o'clock the jury sent out several notes to their friends, apprizing them that there was no probability of their coming to a decision, and that, therefore, they need not expect them home all night.

At eight o'clock on the following morning Lord Tenterden arrived at the court. At a quarter past nine the jury entered the box, and were asked whether they were agreed in their verdict. The foreman of the jury said they were not agreed, nor was it likely that they should come to a conclusion one way or the other, and it was evident they would not yield. The jury had now been locked up for fifteen hours, and many of them were so fatigued, that if they were to be locked up again, serious consequences might follow. Lord Tenterden inquired on what ground they differed?—The jury intimated that two jurymen had declared their sentiments so strongly, that it was impossible to expect them to yield.

Lord Tenterden.—Then, gentlemen, you are discharged.

Thus did Mr. Cobbett escape the dreadful vengeance that had been prepared for him by his whig persecutors. That his innocence of any guilty intention to excite the agricultural labourers to acts of lawless violence, was clearly proved must be evident to any one who has carefully read his able defence. Nay, even Lord Brougham's evidence goes at once to destroy every charge that had been brought against him, for if he really had been the seditious and restless spirit represented in the indictment, surely his lordship would have been the last person to have been in treaty with him for the re-publication of a work written by the defendant at a period, when his political opinions were exactly the same, that they were when the alleged libel was sent out to the world. But the whole charge was too trumperry to be maintained; the honest portion of the jury resolved to stand between an oppressed man and

the vengeance of the law, and Mr. Cobbett escaped the heavy doom that the malice of his enemies had prepared for him.

“ On this occasion,” says Mr. Cobbett, “ several gentlemen called upon me at Bolt-court, respecting a subscription to defray my expenses, and also to give me a dinner to commemorate my escape from the fangs of my persecutors ; with regard to the latter, though I do not like dinners, I shall leave gentlemen to do as they please, but in regard to the former, I absolutely decline that. Any thing that is done should be calculated to have a *lasting* effect, such as A PIECE OF PLATE PRESENTED TO ME, having inscribed on it the history of this prosecution. However the friends of reform, and of the liberty of the press will have time enough to think of this. In the meantime I will publish in a very few days, a full length portrait of myself, with a fac simile of my own hand writing : the price of the portrait will be ten shillings, with the usual allowance to print-sellers. I shall be drawn in the dress in which I appeared at the trial, from a picture painted by Mr. Cooke, an American artist.

The picture was published, but the piece of plate never was given, but this trial will ever be conspicuous in English history as a proof of the inestimable benefit of trial by jury.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Parliament, which had been prorogued on the 20th October, 1831, was again assembled on the 6th December. Even if ministers had been inclined to take advantage of a longer interval, their reforming adherents were too violent and impatient to leave them any chance of retaining their popularity, unless they introduced anew, without delay, the bill which had just been lost in the House of Lords, and prepared at the same time to exercise the royal prerogative in so modelling that house, as to fill it with a majority favourable to the popular innovations which were in prospect. The bill had scarcely been negatived, when deputations of London reformers intruded themselves into the presence of Earl Grey, urging the necessity of not prolonging the prorogation beyond a week or two, and of immediately renewing the efforts to accomplish the same kind and measure of reform. Ministers themselves were pledged neither to propose nor to accede to any bill "less efficient," than the one which the Lords had just rejected. It was possible they might consider something very different in kind to be equally efficient in its results, but to the ears of their supporters this language must have meant, that the same quantity of actual innovation, was still to be enforced, and if so, then it was not easy to see how a different result could be anticipated in the House of Peers. The political unions, therefore, the reforming clubs, and the reforming journals, pressed upon the ministry day and night, the necessity of constraining the king to create such a number of peers, as would render futile all opposition in the upper house, and Lord Grey was told, that if he hesitated to take this step, he would be regarded and treated as a betrayer of that cause, which alone had given him power, and had enabled

him to retain it. It was taken for granted, that the king, who was himself held forth as the great patron of the bill, was ready to secure its success by making the peers bend to the prerogative, or if he should be reluctant, then it was plainly announced, the people would find means to bring both his majesty and the peers into a fitting temper of concession.

On the 12th December, Lord John Russell moved for leave to bring in a new Reform Bill, The principal of the new measure was to be the same with that of its predecessor. Any alteration which had been made left its efficiency unimpaired. On the 19th March, the motion for the third reading was met by an amendment, moved by Lord Mahon, that it should be read a third time that day six months. The amendment was seconded by Sir John Malcolm and followed by a debate, which was continued on the 20th and 22nd. The division gave a majority of 116 for the third reading, there being 355 for the motion and 239 for the amendment. On the 23rd March, the Reform Bill was passed.

On the 16th August, parliament was prorogued, and the registration of the new constituency having been completed all over the kingdom, parliament was dissolved on the 3rd December, and the first general election under the Reform Act took place, the writs being made returnable on the 19th January 1833.

Whilst these great events were passing in England, Cobbett was lionizing in Scotland, his account of which is rich with information, national, individual, and political. According to his own description, he was one of the greatest lions that had visited the land of cakes for the last century, and in the full spirit of his egoistical character, he issued daily a kind of bulletin of where William Cobbett was to be found and seen, the time of his arrival and departure from particular places—the inns where, he dined, and other minutiae, which whilst they flattered his own vanity, fully exposed to the shrewd and deep-thinking Scots the natural weakness of his character. At Glasgow a public dinner was given to him, at which of

of course he made a speech embracing the usual topics, repeating the twentieth time told tale of the debt due to Sir Francis Burdett, whom singularly enough he calls on this occasion, the *worthy, kind-hearted Baronet!!* One circumstance, he mentioned in this speech, of the truth of which we must leave our readers to form their own opinion—"It was said he was fond of money, very fond indeed, when he might have rolled in it in 1803; again when the whigs came into power in 1806, and again in 1817; at all these times, *he might have had as much as he could ask in a reasonable way*, not perhaps a boll of guineas, *but he was sure it might have been a bushel*. The government considered what was best, whether to *expend millions on hirelings to write him down, or to give him £100,000 to keep him silent*. All these offers have been published, with the times and circumstances, *but they were invariably refused*." On this head we can only say, that Mr. Perceval had such an opinion of the character of Mr. Cobbett, that he did not think him worth buying at all, and in regard to the offer of £100,000 to keep him silent, we do not believe that it was ever made, or that if it had been made, it would have been refused.

Preparations were now made for a general election all over the kingdom, and perhaps amongst all the candidates, no one was more upon the alert than William Cobbett. At this time there were three parties in the field; first came the ministerial candidates, next came the tories, now ycleped conservatives, who thought the ministers had already gone too far, and last, but not least, were the radicals, who were determined to spur the ministers on to a great deal further in their task of reforming public abuses.

The elections went of course in by for the greater number of instances in favour of the ministerial candidates, who professed the same general views, and declared their adherence to a reforming ministry. Thus the ministerial candidates obtained a majority, which, if increased by the radical members, who were willing to go all lengths with them in one direction, was overwhelming, and which, even without

them, seemed to be as decisive a majority as a minister could wish. The professed radicals stood principally for the increased boroughs, where a large constituency seemed to offer them the best safeguard against the bribery and corruption of the vanquished Tories.

Mr. Cobbett first started for Manchester, having received an invitation from that place, at the same time that one was sent to him to become a candidate for Oldham. Had the invitation come from the latter place first, Mr. Cobbett would have declined that from Manchester, because, according to his own words, "My object was not to disturb any place, but to take the seat with as much quietness as possible. But having accepted of the invitation from Manchester, many worthy and most zealous men having put themselves in motion to effect this object, it became my duty to second their efforts, with as much activity and zeal as if I had been nominated for Manchester alone, and this duty from the first moment to the last, I am sure I have performed to their entire satisfaction, though I was all along convinced that it was next to impossible to carry the election for Manchester, especially when every one in that town knew to nearly a certainty, that I should be elected for Oldham. In accordance with this, my sense of duty towards the people at Manchester, the day of nomination being the same at both towns; I thought it right to appear in person at the nomination at Manchester and not at Oldham. Even if Manchester had not been, for the reasons before-mentioned, entitled to the priority in this respect, there was the important circumstance, that at Manchester, there were four rival candidates to meet, face to face, four men of great weight on such an occasion, each with numerous opulent supporters, whereas at Oldham, there were none *but perfectly insignificant opponents*,* and there was my intended colleague, a thousand times more than

* William Cobbett here quite forgets himself, there is neither merit nor honour in overcoming an insignificant opponent, and considering his insatiable vanity, it is a matter of surprise, that he did not represent his Oldham opponents as men, whom no one could overcome but himself.

a match for all those opponents put together. For these reasons I was at the opening of the election at Manchester, *where having obtained an immense majority upon the view, having obtained the decision of the public at Manchester, I went off to Oldham.*"

In regard to the election at Manchester, Cobbett entertained no doubt that he would have been returned by *an immense majority*, but the result of the Oldham election was known at Manchester by twelve o'clock on the first polling day, and therefore as William Cobbett was now a member of parliament, the voters of Manchester transferred their votes to the next man, whom they liked best, yet in spite of this, at the close of the poll, 1,305 persons had voted for Mr. Cobbett.

The election at Oldham commenced on Wednesday the 12th December, when five candidates presented themselves, Fielden, Cobbett, Bright, Burge, and Stephen. The two former having polled nearly 700 votes each, whilst two of the latter did not reach 150, and one only 3, the contest was resigned, and John Fielden and William Cobbett, Esqrs, were declared duly elected to represent the town of Oldham in the first reform parliament.

The following address to the electors of Oldham, which was circulated by the two successful candidates, was copied into almost every paper professing liberal principles, throughout the kingdom. It need not be stated, that the tory papers carefully abstained from saying a word about it. It is scarcely necessary to state that it was written by Mr. Cobbett.

" TO THE ELECTORS OF OLDHAM.

" Oldham, December 14th, 1832.

" GENTLEMEN,

" We return you our best thanks for the great honour which you have done us, in choosing us to represent this borough in parliament, and thereby declaring us to be, in your opinion, worthy of the great trust of watching over, and taking care to provide for the safety of your properties, your liberties,

and your lives. Fully sensible of the great duties, which your confidence in us has thus imposed upon us, well aware of the arduousness of the undertaking, still we encounter the task willingly and cheerfully. Stimulated by your example to that steadiness of purpose, that diligence, that perseverance, that devotion to public duty, of all which you have upon this occasion set a pattern worthy of being followed by the whole kingdom; stimulated by this, your example, we confidently hope that we shall be enabled by following that example, to assist in producing such a change as shall cause the industrious people in all the walks of life, and in every part of the kingdom, once more to have those enjoyments, which are the just reward of their several labours, and as shall prevent the fruit of those labours *from being devoured by those who render nothing in return.*

“Gentlemen,—where ALL had done so well; where EVERY MAN has done his best; where electors and non-electors have so cordially united in the performance of this great duty, it would be invidious to attempt to discriminate, and in this case the only subject of regret with us is, that there should have been non-electors at all. And, gentlemen, if we had before wanted any thing to convince us that every man being of age, of sane mind, and unstained by indelible crime ought to have a vote, your conduct on this occasion would have produced such conviction.

“We beg leave to thank you in a more particular manner, for your peaceable, your sensible, your decorous behaviour, during the whole of this proceeding from the beginning to the end, and, gentlemen, if any one in our hearing should still have the temerity and the injustice to represent the people of England as not *well informed enough* to be entrusted with universal suffrage, you will never find us fail to produce this excellent conduct of yours, as a conclusive answer to such objections.

“Ostentatious show of every description, and particularly those *chairings* which have been customary at boroughmonger elections, are not only contrary to our taste and to the habits

of our lives, but in this case, they are forbidden by that sound sense of which you have given so many conspicuous proofs. Amongst the means which tyrants make use of, are those of amusing and diverting the miserable people with gaudy shows, and pompous exhibitions, but what do we want more than this one fact, that the legislative lacqueys of the boroughmongers, that those corrupt men, whose measures have brought the country to its present state of wretchedness, have all been carried in triumphal chairs on the shoulders of those degraded creatures, who were base enough to be hired to perform the disgraceful office. Never was there a *charring* in the United States of America; slaves carry their pretended representatives on their shoulders, or hitch themselves on their to chariot wheels; freemen leave their real representatives to walk on foot.*

“Once more, Gentlemen, accept of our sincere thanks for the honour which you have done us, be assured of our strict adherence to all the pledges that we have given you, be assured of our diligent attention to all your grievances, whether local or general; give us leave to hope that oppressors of every description, by seeing your determination not to be longer oppressed, will be disposed to relinquish all attempts at further oppression, give us leave, in conclusion, to express our firm reliance on your support in the performance of our labours, and finally we express to you our confident expectation of such a result, proceeding from this our meritorious conduct, as will make your children remember this day with gratitude to their fathers, and as will endear the name of Oldham to every lover of freedom and of justice, from one end of the kingdom to the other.

“With these sentiments, and with an anxious wish that we may be able to assist in causing prosperity to return to your

* How strangely do these sentiments clash with those which Cobbett has frequently expressed on his entrance into and departure from the provincial towns of England, on one of which occasions he says “The people shewed themselves truly English by taking the horses from my carriage, and dragging me to the inn.”

industrious dwellings, with our best wishes for the happiness of yourselves, your wives, and your children, and all that are dear to you, we remain,

“ Your faithful friends,

“ And most obedient servants

“ WILLIAM COBBETT,

“ JOHN FIELDEN.”

Cobbett, in the first Register after his election, declared that his return to Parliament was an event, on which not only England, but ALL EUROPE LOOKED WITH INTEREST; (he should have added the Moguls of Tartary, and no doubt, would have added the Esquimaux of Boothia Felix, had such a country then been known to exist on the face of the globe.) But there was a difficulty raised as to his ever being able to take his seat for Oldham, and that was, his qualification. At the time of his election, he was not possessed of an acre of land, and yet before he could sit in the house, he had to prove that he was worth three hundred a year in landed property. The manner in which this difficulty was overcome was never made public, but from some private information, we are informed, that his worthy colleague assisted him out of his dilemma, and his qualification was accepted at the table of the House of Commons.

As the meeting of the first reformed parliament approached, public attention was directed with some anxiety towards its probable temper and deliberations. The result of the general election was decidedly in favour of the whig ministry. The great majority of the house consisted of members inclined to follow and support them, and as there seldom could be an occasion on which the two divisions of the opposition, differing more from each other than either of them did from the ministry, could be expected to unite, every thing seemed to promise that the government would be omnipotent in parliament. Their measures might fall far short of what was expected and desired by the lovers of yet more rigid reforms, and might go far beyond what the conservatives deemed safe

or convenient, but the ministers were sure of being joined by the one of those parties to overcome the resistance or check the fervour of the other. To one danger, indeed, the ministers were exposed; their performances must either fall greatly short of what they had promised, and produce disappointment, or they must throw themselves, to support their popularity, into a career of indiscriminate change, on which they did not wish voluntarily to enter.

The public agitation, which had been created and fostered in the great mass of the people, while urging on the Reform Bill, had produced extravagant expectations, that the meeting of a reformed parliament would necessarily be followed by the redress of every thing evil, that all taxes complained of would forthwith disappear, that the corn laws would fall to make cheap bread, that the wages of labour would be increased, while the price of all things necessary to the support or comfortable enjoyment of life would be reduced.

The parliament about which so much expectation had been raised, was opened by commission on the 29th January 1833, when the election of Mr. C. M. Sutton as speaker having taken place, which appointment, however, was opposed by Mr. Cobbett, the king's speech and the usual address to his majesty came under the consideration of the house. To the one which emanated immediately from the ministers, a violent opposition was carried by many of the more radical members, which terminated with Mr. Cobbett's first effort in parliament. On the bringing up of the report, he moved that the whole of the address should be rejected, and that another, which he proposed to the following effect should be adopted, "Assuring his majesty that the House of Commons would direct its most serious attention to the papers which his majesty had directed to be laid on the table of the house relating to Portugal and Holland, and would anxiously consider the questions relating to the charters of the Bank of England and the East India Company; thanking his majesty for having suggested a very great alteration with respect to the temporalities of the church; and assuring his majesty that the house would enter into the

examination of that subject without passion or prejudice; thanking his majesty for having directed the estimates to be prepared with all due economy, and expressing regret that his majesty had not been advised to suggest the propriety of lessening the burdens of the suffering community, and assuring him that the house would investigate the causes of distress, and institute measures to produce effectual and permanent relief; informing his majesty that the house was ready to adopt every constitutional mode of controlling and punishing the disturbers of the public peace in Ireland, and of strengthening those ties which connected the two countries; deeming that their separation would be fraught with destruction to the peace and welfare of his majesty's dominions, and assuring his majesty that the house was determined to go into a full consideration of the manifold grievances under which the Irish people laboured."

This amended address was of course not approved of by ministers, but being pressed to a division there were 23 ayes and 323 noes, thus rejecting Mr. Cobbett's address by a majority of 300.

Thus defeated in the outset of his parliamentary career, Mr. Cobbett only resolved the more vehemently to urge a variety of motions, which, had they been successful, would have tended greatly towards the extended freedom and happiness of the people.

Of Mr. Cobbett's appearance in the House of Commons the following sketch is drawn by the author of *Random Recollections of the House of Commons*.

"In personal stature the late Mr. Cobbett was tall and athletic. I should think he could not have been less than six feet two, whilst his breadth was proportionably great. He was, indeed, one of the stoutest men in the house. I have said there was a tendency to corpulation about him. His hair was of a milk white colour, and his complexion ruddy. His features were not strongly marked. What struck you most about his face, was his small, sparkling, laughing eyes. When disposed to be humourous himself, you had only to look at his eyes, and you were sure to sympathize with his merri-

ment. When not speaking, the expression of his eye and his countenance was very different. He was one of the most striking refutations of the principles of Lavater I ever witnessed. Never were the looks of any man, more completely at variance with his character. There was something so dull and heavy about his whole appearance, that any one, who did not know him, would at once set him down for some country clodpole, to use a favourite expression of his own, who not only never read a book, or had a single idea in his head; but who was a mere mass of mortality, without a particle of sensibility of any kind in his composition. He usually sat with one leg over the other, his head slightly drooping, as if sleeping on his breast, and his hat down almost to his eyes. His usual dress was a light grey coat, of a full make, a white waistcoat, and kerseymere breeches, of a sandy colour. When he walked about the house, he generally had his hands inserted in his breeches' pockets. Considering his advanced age, seventy-three, he looked remarkably hale and healthy, and walked with a firm, but slow step. A fortnight before his death, he thought himself, and so did all who saw him, that he was destined to live for many years to come."

It may be naturally supposed, that Cobbett's Register was at this time the vehicle for communicating to the public all that he said in the House of Commons, and not seldom, what he did not say. That part of the Register, however, which will afford the greatest merriment is his description of the interior of the House of Commons. Alluding to the speaker he says, "It is impossible for our speaker to act with dignity, if he would. From his talents, his manner, his person, and altogether, he is as much calculated to be surrounded with dignified appearance as any man can be, but if my readers could see him in his chair, with two or three at a time poking forward, to whisper him and teaze him about something or another, and that too in the midst of a debate; carrying bits of paper to him with a pen and some ink in it for him to write something, pulling him from side to side; if they could see this, they would certainly admire his patient

endurance of it, but they would certainly blush for their country, if they had ever seen the manner in which members treat the speaker of a little house of assembly in America, where a member would no more think of going up to the chair of the speaker, during the sitting of the house, unless in a formal manner in the discharge of some legislative function, than he would think of shooting that speaker through the head."

Speaking of the accommodation of the House of Commons, he says, "Why are we squeezed into so small a space, that it is absolutely impossible that there should be calm and regular discussion, even from that circumstance alone? Why do we live in this hubbub? Why are we exposed to all these inconveniences? Why are 658 of us crammed into a space that allows to each of us no more than a foot and a half square, while at the same time each of the servants of the king, whom *we* pay, has a palace to live in, and more unoccupied space in that palace than the little *hole* into which we are all crammed, to make the laws by which this great kingdom is governed? Look at the millions which have been expended on palaces within these very few years; look at the *pullings down* * and the buildings up, and the *pullings down again*,† before the thing built has been used: when

* One of these *pullings down*, as Cobbett styles them, was an ugly and misshapen mass of stone and mortar, called a palace, which George III. in a *lucid interval*, erected on a swampy piece of ground at Kew. When finished it was found to be uninhabitable, and the stones were removed to contribute to the erection of some other object of royal folly and extravagance.

† Another of these *buildings up* and *pullings down*, has been that toad-in-the-hole, called Buckingham Palace; the erection of which was, *by particular interest*, intrusted to an individual, who in the end was found incompetent to the task. What one built up, another pulled down, and considering the superfluity of palaces in this kingdom, one of which is divided and sub-divided into apartments for some of the paupers and demicreps of the aristocracy; it is much to be regretted, that as the pulling down once commenced, the palace was not pulled down altogether.

Windsor Castle has for the last thirty years been one continued exhibition of building up and pulling down; the expence of some portion of which was, it is true, defrayed by the AUSTRIAN GODSEND, but it should be remembered that the money lent to the insolvent emperor of Austria belonged to the people

they see all manner of conveniences, even extending to eastern luxury; tables, bureaux, eastern chairs, sofas, and all sorts of things provided in the most extensive style for even clerks in the offices, to use or to loll upon. When they see these, and reflect that they are paid for out of the public money, and see us crammed into this little hole, squeezing one another, treading upon each others toes, running about to get a seat; going to *the hole* at seven o'clock in the morning, as I do, to stick a bit of paper with my name on it on a bench, to indicate that I mean to sit there for that day, and then to see us routed out of those places again, after a division has taken place, and see us running and scrambling for a seat, in just the same manner as people do, when they are let into a dining room at a public dinner at the Crown and Anchor or elsewhere; when the people see all this, when they see their representatives treated thus, and reflect at the same time on *the sofas** of the clerks in the offices, they most know that there is a MOTIVE for it, but I much question if they will come to a determination, that that motive is likely to be the promotion of their interests."

Cobbett agrees in opinion with many very sensible men, that the country ought not to be saddled with the expence of the erection of new houses of parliament, as long as the *thing* which has been erected at Pimlico is in existence. The king has palaces enough, and more than he wants, unless it were

of England, and if the ministers of the day chose to compromise the debt, and take ten-shillings in the pound, the money thus obtained ought to have been returned to those who lent it, and not squandered away in the fripperies and gingerbread work, emanating from the crude conceptions of a Sir Jeffery Wyatville, to whom Windsor Palace has been a better godsend than even the Austrian was to the people of this country.

* We have been long privy to a glaring and scandalous abuse of the public money, which is carried on by some of the principals of the public offices. We know a tradesman, who receives an order for an article, apparently for the use of the office, and it appears in the account to be delivered as such; but if the order was for a register stove, it is metamorphosed into a pair of silver candlesticks, *not* for the use of the office. The tradesman must hold his tongue, or he loses the custom.

supposed that his majesty's taste was like that of the sailor, who having his pockets full of prize money, hired one post chaise for himself and another for his hat. "To take your seat in that house," says Cobbett, "and to sit as constantly as you ought to do, requires in the present state of things, not only perfect health but great bodily strength, and it is not always that the wisest heads are placed upon the shoulders of the strongest bodies. I know pretty well what a regiment of soldiers is, and I never saw one, the private men of which would have been able to undergo a regular and constant attendance in that house, constructed as it now is, and annoying as every man's situation is. For my own part, I find very little inconvenience, compared with what others experience. I live within four hundred yards of my seat in the house. I can *come* (qy. go) away and return with very little inconvenience; My habits are such as to keep me always in good health; I never dine out; I know nothing of feasting of any sort; I have nothing to annoy me; I have great pleasure in performing my duty; I have sensible constituents, and the perfect confidence which they have in ME and my colleague prevents them from making applications to occupy any part of our time, or demand any part of our cares."

In regard to these *applications*, we cannot refrain noticing one part of the conduct of Mr. Cobbett, which lowered him considerably in the estimation of all the readers of the Register, at the same time that it was injurious to his character and dignity as a member of the House of Commons. In regard, however, to what may be termed DIGNITY OF CHARACTER, Cobbett scarcely knew the acceptation of the term, in whatever situation he might be placed, his native rust adhered to him, and in some instances the incrustation was so deep that not the slightest polish could be given to it. Thus, whilst on one page of his Register he was impressing upon his readers the astounding effects which his oratory had made upon all the members of the house, and boasting of the extraordinary influence which he had already obtained, on the opposite page, we find him issuing his positive declara-

tion, not to receive a single twopenny post letter without *the postage being paid*. "Nothing is so easy," says Cobbett, "as to drop a piece of paper into a post shop; nothing is so easy as to tax a man in this way, but this is a tax I will not pay; it is a tax that I take especial care never to impose upon any body. Twelve letters a day amount to eighteen pounds, five shillings a year, which is as much as is probably necessary to maintain my house one week out of the fifty-two. I need say no more to convince any reasonable man *that all twopenny post letters should come to me postage free*." And all this from a member of Parliament, who but a few days before had sworn that he was worth £300 a year in landed property, and the proprietor of a very lucrative periodical!!

On the subject of letters, the following may be considered as a matchless specimen of Cobbett's vanity, at the same time that we recommend it to the perusal of the Upcotts and the Andersons of the day, and all hunters after autographs.

"With regard to general post letters, the number which I have received has not exceeded the fifteen, which are allowed by the act of parliament, but several people have written to me, merely *for the purpose of receiving an answer, in order that they might preserve 'the frank,' as a specimen of my hand writing*. I have no reason to be angry with such persons, but this affair of collecting autographs has always appeared to me to be a proof that the parties want to be set to work. Amongst the *sensible* and zealous working people of Scotland, *a desire to have a scrap of writing under my hand WAS NOT ONLY EXCUSABLE, BUT LAUDABLE*, because it was bottomed on *the best of principles* :* but that there should be men, or even sensible women, to make it part of the business of their life to make a collection of hand writings, even this alone proves that society is out of joint, and I will

* Mr. Cobbett should have informed us what those best of principles are, for we candidly acknowledge ourselves incompetent to discover them. The Scotch are a sensible people, and therefore relying upon that sense, we question the fact of their having placed any value upon a scrap of Mr. Cobbett's hand writing.

be bound to say, that there are in England at this moment, fifty thousand collectors of autographs, every one of whom, were there no misapplication of the public money, would be at work with a needle, instead of a pen, or would be wielding a scrubbing-brush, or have their pretty hands and arms in the washing tub. Therefore, to a folly like this, never will I give my countenance. I have never without the greatest reluctance suffered a moment of my time to be taken up with the painting of my picture, or any thing of the sort. I am known and to be remembered by my public writings and public acts, and if these be not sufficient for the purpose, I ought not to be known or remembered at all."

Cobbett also desires, in the instructions to his correspondents, that no one will attach the cognomen of *Esquire* to his name. "I have the honour," says Cobbett, "to be a member of Parliament for Oldham; that honour I shall endeavour to merit as long as life and health shall enable me to take a part in these great matters. I desire no other title, no other title will I have; and I shall deem it a favour if no one attempt to give me any other."

Despite of this injunction, however, letters poured in upon the member of Oldham, with the obnoxious appendage of *Esquire* to his name, many of which were written by some mischievous wags, who would send their orders to him for a pennyworth of some of the seeds, which he was continually advertising in his Register as being for sale, at the same time constantly impressing it upon the attention of the public, "*that the money must be paid at my shop before the seed be sent away.*" Cobbett generally closed his puffs direct about his seeds, with his puffs oblique on the great merit of his book, entitled the *ENGLISH GARDENER*, observing, that it is a direct act of folly in a person buying seeds and at the same time to be ignorant of *how* to sow them—the knowledge of that *how* was only to be obtained in the *English Gardener*. On this subject, neither Abercrombie, Mawe, nor Nichols was worthy of consultation—Cobbett alone was the Coryphæus of Gardeners!

The character of Mr. Cobbett has already stood conspicuous for vanity and egotism, but in no instance did those great and intolerable weaknesses display themselves more, than in the case of the Coventry election, Mr. Ellice having vacated his seat on accepting office under the ministry. On this occasion, Mr. Cobbett would make the people of England believe, that the good people of Coventry were so much at a nonplus for a member to prevent the return of Mr. Ellice, that there was no one in his majesty's dominions to whom they could more properly apply to name some person fit to represent their city, than William Cobbett, member for Oldham. The worthy member professes to receive a letter from a Mr. Alexander Yates, requesting him to nominate a candidate for Coventry, and whom does he nominate—not a person of any standing, rank, opulence, or influence in the country, but his own son, John M. Cobbett, at the same time informing Mr. Yates and the electors of Coventry, that both his sons are *so ticklish, so thin-skinned* as to any thing being said about their merits, that he had made the offer of his son's services to the good people of Coventry, without getting the consent of the said son. John M. Cobbett was accordingly on the day of election put in nomination as a candidate for the representation of the city of Coventry—but there the bubble burst, for no candidate of the name of Cobbett presented himself on the hustings, being detained, according to his father's statement by illness in London, and Mr. Ellice was allowed to walk over the course. "This," says the member for Oldham, "would not have been the case had *I* been there; a few speeches and addresses from *me*, *would have done the thing*, and tripped up the heels of Ellice." The secret of the affair was, that the member for Oldham had, in a most extraordinary fit of liberality, offered to Mr. Yates to defray the expences of his son's election, *and that the said Mr. Yates might draw upon him at three day's sight for the amount*. This St. Vitus' fit of liberality, however, subsided, and John M. Cobbett was taken ill, and Coventry lost a Cobbett for its representative.

Cobbett calls this an interference of Providence in the affairs of men ; he had resolved to take the advantage of the Easter recess to ruralize amongst the heaths of Surrey, about thirty-six miles from London, and then and there to cleanse himself from the dust and smoke of Bolt-court ! The affair of the Coventry election put up its head ; the Surrey heaths saw not the member for Oldham ; and thus, he says, *does Providence interfere at times in the affairs of men and nations*, and if Cobbett had followed up this idea, there is very little doubt that he would soon have become a convert to the Godwinian philosophy, although he might have held and did hold the talented author of it in contempt.

With the single exception of a political tour to Ireland, Mr. Cobbett suffered no other public engagement to withdraw his attention from his parliamentary duties. That tour was undertaken, as he stated, for the purpose of seeing with his own eyes the state of things in a country which had afforded so fertile a field for political controversy. Upon Ireland he exercised those unrivalled powers of observation which he possessed, and the results were communicated to the public in his well known letter to Marshall, a labourer upon his farm. His reception in the sister island was cordial, and even enthusiastic. Amongst the numerous invitations which he received, was a very pressing one from Mr. O'Connell, to Derrynane Abbey. This he declined, on the plea of a want of time ; but he promised, at a future period, to make a second journey to Ireland, for the express purpose of visiting the great agitator at his family seat. Looking, however, at the language exchanged between the parties, the intention of fulfilling this promise, may perhaps, be regarded as doubtful, for Cobbett was not a man readily to forget the offences of an adversary, who had returned him blow for blow, and who was found in invective and scurrility to be a match for him.

The parliamentary career of Mr. Cobbett displayed little of that originality which was looked for from the versatile author of the Political Register, and was on the whole marked

by a calmness and moderation little to be expected. Although Mr. Cobbett was on the whole a good speaker, he was not a good debater, and therefore was not in his element in the House of Commons. He could get on well enough in a lecture, when he had all the talk to himself, but he could not bear opposition with temper, and he had not a command of resources sufficient for the exigencies of a discussion. What he might have been, had he entered parliament at an earlier period of his life, we know not, but he was evidently too old, at seventy years of age to cut a figure as a ready speaker. He made one or two good speeches, but he repeated himself, and always made the same speech. To a certain extent, indeed, his Register was liable to a like charge of sameness, but his happy illustrations and descriptions made all his readers forget that they had heard the same opinions repeated by him a hundred times before.

The greatest stain upon his parliamentary conduct, was his motion for an address to his majesty, praying him to dismiss Sir Robert Peel from the privy council. This motion came on on Thursday the 16th of May, the ground of which was the alteration of the currency made under the auspices of the right honourable baronet. A motion more frivolous, more absurd, and with pain it must be added, more disreputable to its author was never made within the walls of either houses of parliament. On the change in the currency, various opinions have been held, and will continue to be held, but the honourable motives of Sir Robert Peel, have never been questioned by any but Mr. Cobbett, and to inflict a severe mark of disgrace upon a distinguished statesman, for the line of conduct conscientiously adopted in the discharge of his duty to the crown and country, would have been an act of injustice, which few men, it is to be hoped in any station, would have dared to recommend. When Sir Robert Peel rose to address the house, he was received with the most deafening cheers, which lasted upwards of a quarter of an hour. The division, for the motion was actually pressed to a division, was equally triumphant in his favour. In a house

of three hundred and two members, four only were found to vote with Mr. Cobbett, viz. Mr. T. Attwood, Mr. P. Lalor, Mr. J. O'Connell, and Mr. J. Roe, leaving two hundred and ninety-eight to ratify the triumph of Sir Robert Peel, nor did Mr. Cobbett's discomfiture end here, for the chancellor of the exchequer, after observing that never within his knowledge, had a personal attack been made within those walls upon such grounds, or supported like the present, moved that the resolutions which had been moved by the member for Oldham be not entered on the minutes. The speaker put the question, "That the proceedings be expunged." This gave rise to some comments on the part of Mr. Cobbett, who maintained, that expunging a resolution and not entering it on the minutes, were two different things. "If" said Mr. Cobbett, "the house prevent this resolution from being entered on the minutes, then there are but two things remaining for ministers to do, first to let no man speak in this house without their permission, and next to move that the gallery be closed." The question as worded by the speaker, was ultimately put, when there appeared 295 for it, and 6 against it. It may be undeniably stated that this injudicious step on the part of Mr. Cobbett gave the death blow to even the little influence which he possessed in the house, and rendered him virtually one of the most inefficient members of the house. He continued, however, to attend with great regularity, and occasionally to take part in the debates, but he might as well have remained silent in his seat, so little attention was paid to him.

On the 27th June 1833, Mr. Cobbett presented a petition to the House of Commons, from a large number of the inhabitants of Camberwell and Walworth, being members of a political union, in those populous places. The petitioners complained that one William Popay became a member of their union about fifteen months previously; that he attended their meetings, and frequently urged the members to adopt the most violent course against the existing government; that he dressed himself in plain clothes, the more readily to deceive

and lead them on to his infamous designs, and that they (the petitioners) were in the utmost peril of falling into the evils he had designed, when chance led to the discovery of his motives, and the dreadful fate he had prepared for them.

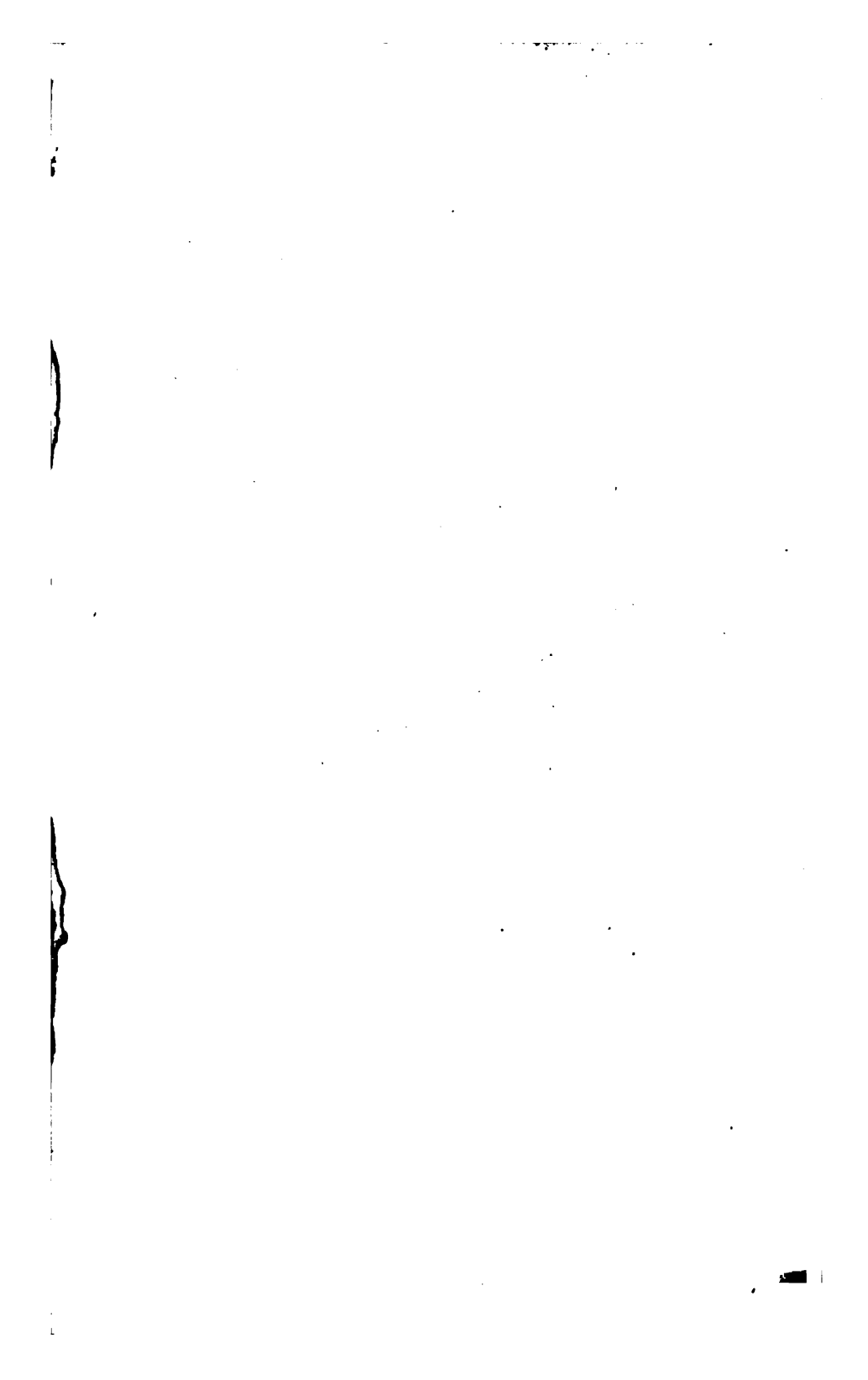
Having read the whole of the petition to the house, Mr. Cobbett proceeded to animadvert with the utmost severity on the baseness of the policeman, Popay, in the course he had pursued towards these unsuspecting victims of his evil designs. He even accused government of being privy to the whole undertaking, and concluded by praying that a committee should be appointed to investigate the whole affair. This, after some opposition, was finally acceded to, and a vast mass of evidence having been heard, the committee declared that the charges brought against Popay were clearly proved, and that they had detected many instances in which he had disguised himself in plain clothes, for the purpose of misleading those parties, whom he had joined and professed to agree with. The result was, that Popay was discharged from the police force, and there for the present the matter rested.

At the general election which followed Sir Robert Peel's accession to the helm of power, Mr. Cobbett was again returned for Oldham, and resumed his duties in the new parliament, without any reason to believe that his mortal career was approaching to an end. The motion of the Marquess of Chandos on the malt tax called forth all the interest which he was accustomed to take in agricultural questions. He remained in his place during the whole debate, and as he stated, intended to answer at length the arguments of the advocates for the continuance of the tax, but was prevented by a sudden attack of a peculiar disease of the throat to which he was subject. From the effects of this evening, it is supposed that he never entirely recovered. He at length became seriously ill, but no apprehensions were entertained by the public, at least as to any fatal result. The news of his death burst on the great mass of his readers somewhat unexpectedly in the following communication from his eldest son, which was the first article in the Register of the 20th June.

“Clifford's Inn, Friday Morning, June 19th 1833.

“It is my mournful duty to state that the hand which has guided this work for thirty-three years has ceased to move. The readers of the Register will of course look to this number for some particulars of the close of my father's life, but they will, I am sure, be forgiving, if they find them shortly stated.

“A great inclination to inflammation of the throat had caused him annoyance from time to time, for several years, and, as he got older, it enfeebled him more. He was suffering from one of these attacks during the late spring, and it will be recollected, that when the Marquess of Chandos brought on his motion for a repeal of the malt-tax, my father attempted to speak, but could not make his voice audible beyond the few members who sat round him. He remained to vote on that motion, and increased his ailment; but on the voting of supplies, on the nights of Friday, the 15th, and Monday, the 18th May, he exerted himself so much, and sat so late, that he laid himself up. He determined, nevertheless, to attend the house again on the evening of the Marquess of Chandos's motion on agricultural distress on the 25th of May; and the exertion of speaking and remaining late to vote on that occasion, were too much for one already severley unwell. He went down to his farm early on the next morning after the debate, and had resolved to rest himself thoroughly, and get rid of his hoarseness and inflammation. On Thursday night last (June 11th) he felt unusually well, and imprudently drank tea in the open air; but he went to bed apparently in better health. In the early part of the night, he was taken violently ill, and on Friday and Saturday was considered in a dangerous state by the medical attendant. On Sunday he revived again; and on Monday gave us hope that he would yet be well. He talked feebly, but in the most collected and sprightly manner, upon politics and farming; wished for ‘four days rain’ for the Cobbett corn and root crops; and, on Wednesday, he could remain no longer shut up from the fields, but desired to be carried round the farm; which being done, he criticised the





DANIEL O'CONNELL, ESQ. M.P.

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work that had been going on in his absence, and detected some little deviation from his orders, with all the quickness that was so remarkable in him. On Wednesday night (June 17th) he grew more and more feeble, and was evidently sinking; but he continued to answer with perfect clearness, every question that was put to him. In the last half hour his eyes became dim; and at ten minutes after one P.M., he leaned back, closed them as if to sleep, and died without a gasp."

It was Mr. Cobbett's wish to be buried in the same grave as that in which his father and grandfather were deposited. Mr. Cobbett's friends were anxious that his remains should lie in the most conspicuous part of Farnham churchyard, so that a monument to his memory might meet the eye of the traveller, both these objects were attained. The grave of the grandfather is just opposite the great entrance to the church, and it is impossible to approach or leave that building without seeing the spot. The old tombstone of Mr. Cobbett's ancestor was cleared of its incumbrance of clay, but time has done its works upon it; we could, however, distinguish the words—

"In memory of George Cobbett, who died on the 13th of December, 1760, aged (we think) 59." The latter part of the inscription is obliterated. When we arrived at the church on Friday afternoon the funeral service was performing over an inhabitant of Farnham, and the grave of Cobbett, which had just been dug, which was then being bricked up so as to form a sort of vault. Round the last chamber of this talented man were standing many old and poor inhabitants, each of whom had a particular recollection, or a hearsay respecting him. From these, however, we gathered only that he was a subject of general interest and regard in Farnham and its vicinity. As a farmer he seems to have been deemed eccentric; it was his custom to grow wheat in strips, some four feet apart, and between each of these to plant cabbages, &c.

Mr. Newenham and Mr. Gibson, of Farnham, were the medical attendants of Mr. Cobbett in his last illness. The

immediate cause of death was water on the chest, unaccompanied by any other complaint. He suffered considerable pain with firmness and resignation, only discovering impatience at being, as he frequently said, "stived up in doors." The arrangements of the funeral were confided to Mr. George Johnson, undertaker, of Farnham, who politely obliged us with a few particulars. The body was little attenuated, and measured in the coffin six feet one inch. It was the desire of Mr. Cobbett's friends that the funeral should be conducted in the plainest manner, consistent with the character and station of the deceased, and that was also his own wish. The son of the landlord of the "Jolly Farmer," a young man whom Cobbett often noticed, having been both born in the same house, was apprenticed to a plumber, and has had the melancholy task of incasing the mortal remains of his late patron in lead.

The rain poured down incessantly during the day of the funeral, and many who were expected to follow in the procession had not arrived; all that was known up to ten o'clock that night, was that Mr. O'Connell had called in Bolt-court, and intimated his intention of following Cobbett to the grave. Mr. O'Connell's name, however, appearing in the evening papers, as chairman at a public meeting to be held on Saturday morning, threw considerable doubt upon the report. It was rumoured that if Mr. O'Connell did attend, he would speak over the grave. John Leach, Esq. late M.P. for the western division of Surrey, Messrs. Mellish, and Kean, bankers, of Godalming; and Mr. Cobbett's four sons, William, John, James, and Richard, were the only persons that it was positively known would attend.

A hearse and four, and two mourning coaches and four, were the only vehicles provided at Farnham. It was arranged that the other mourning coaches should join the procession as they fell into the line of road from London. The bell tolled out heavily at intervals. Mr. Alderman Scales and many personal friends of the deceased arrived a little before noon.

ORDER OF THE PROCESSION FROM NORMANDY.

THE HEARSE

(drawn by four horses.)

Mourning coach, with four horses

(Messrs. Cobbett, Fielden and John Leach.)

Second mourning coach, with four horses

(Messrs. E. Leach, M. Knowles, Donnelly, Gutsell,
Oldfield, and another.)

Third coach, holding six was from London.

At the Greyhound, between Ashchurch and Farnham the procession was joined by a post-chaise from London, followed by a private carriage, in which were D. O'Connell, Esq., M.P. and D. W. Harvey Esq. M. P. Then three chaises, and Mr. Leach's private carriage.

At about twelve o'clock the movement had been made at Normandy. At the White Post, about a quarter of a mile from the town, where the old Guildford road commences, Mr. Gibson and some other gentlemen of Farnham were collected, intending to fall into the procession on foot.

As the coaches were seen approaching the town, many of the inhabitants, wearing hat-bands, hastened to meet and join in the procession, which entered Farnham church as follows :—

Mr. O'Connell, (standing outside.)

Mr. George Johnson, (undertaker.)

Three Bearers, THE BODY. Three Bearers.

William Cobbett (the eldest son,) John, James, and
Richard Cobbett.

D. W. Harvey, Esq., M.P.

—Knowles, Esq.

Captain Donnelly

—Gutsell, Esq.

—Faithful, Esq.

John Leach, Esq.

E. Leach, Esq.

—Fielden, Esq.

—Oldfield, Esq.

—Elliman, Esq.

—Beck, Esq.

—Coppin, Esq.

T. Wakley, Esq., M.P.

—Swaine, Esq.

—Stares, Esq. (of Titchfield)

Samuel Wells, Esq.

—Grey, Esq.

—Mellish, Esq. (of
Godalming.)

—Complin, Esq.

—Rogers, Esq.

—Lutchins, Esq.

Alderman Scales.

Many other gentlemen joined the procession at the door; it became, therefore, impossible to take the names in the order they entered, the crowd pressed so vehemently forward as to obscure the view and impede one another.

The Rev. John Menzies then read the 39th and 90th Psalms, with the usual portion of the chapter from St. Paul's Epistles, and then led the way to the grave. The coffin, which was exceedingly heavy, was lowered slowly into its earthly home, and the burial service was read; during which we were surprised to observe Mr. O'Connell put on his cap, which being of green, and having a gold band, was the more remarkable. During the service, Mr. John Cobbett with difficulty sustained himself on Captain Donnelly's arm. He wept bitterly, and was, not without some difficulty, removed from the grave. His brothers, James and Richard, who were also deeply affected, bore him into the vestry. As the mourners left the grave the multitude rushed forward, so as to make it a task of difficulty to see the coffin. The inscription was simply,

WILLIAM COBBETT,

M. P. FOR OLDHAM,

AGED 73.

DIED 18TH JUNE, 1835.

The mourners, with the exception of the Messrs. Cobbett, did not return to their carriages. Mr. O'Connell, and some portion of the party walked to the Bush Inn, some of the others to Mr. Grove's, the Lion and the Lamb. It was impossible to compute the number present with any degree of

accuracy. Along the line of road persons had placed themselves in groups on all the elevations, and subsequently followed in the train. In the churchyard every flat monument held a little knot of persons, and the church was filled in body and galleries.

A great number of ladies were present, but the majority were of the other sex.

Previously to filling up the grave a singular ceremony took place. Three flat stones were lowered upon the coffin (apparently wedges of slate or iron stone) so as to intervene between that and any coffin that may hereafter be placed upon it. Hundreds pressed forward for the last look; some picked up portions of the earth, or plucked a little of the herbage around the grave; and the coaches that arrived from Southampton about four o'clock stopped an extra quarter of an hour in changing, to enable the passengers to step to the churchyard, and see the last of William Cobbett. The funeral and all bearing relation to it was conducted in a style of simplicity and propriety quite in keeping with him to whose honour it was performed.

Some scattered anecdotes of Cobbett's family, &c., we subjoin; it is roadside matter, but obtained generally from those whom we have reason to believe knew him well, and who have shown an interest at his funeral highly honourable to him and to themselves. Many members of Mr. Cobbett's establishment were in attendance, among others Mr. Dean and Mr. Marshall (the William Marshall named in his letters from Ireland).

Mrs. Cobbett and her daughters were in the town of Farnham, and of the personal friends and admirers of the man we could furnish a long list.

Mr. Cobbett has left seven children; of the four sons, three are at the bar; the fourth, Richard, is articled to an attorney (Mr. Faithful). The daughters, Ann, Ellen, and Susan, are unmarried, and we believe all his sons are so too.

Cobbett's grandfather lived next door to the Queen's Head, a little roadside inn, about a mile from Farnham, on the

road to Waverley. A cousin of Mr. Cobbett's, Mr. Cæsar, a pastry-cook, lives in that town, and some other relatives are scattered about the adjacent places.

Mr. O'Connell, whilst standing beside the grave, was asked some questions, which we could not hear, by Mr. Harvey and Mr. Mellish, the honourable gentleman's reply as we caught it, was to this effect :—"No ; I would have spoken, but his family seem to think it had better not be done; and, of course, it rests with them—they know best." At an inn in the town, Mr. Michael Scales had expressed his intention of following Mr. O'Connell's speech by a few remarks, and some persons affirmed Mr. D. W. Harvey would pronounce an eulogium upon the deceased. These rumours proved to be wholly unfounded. After the burial service any oration would have been superfluous, and any eloquence, however sparkling, must fall flatly upon the ear which has drank in the words of that sublime composition.

The grave has now closed for ever on the mortal remains of William Cobbett, who, during a long, active, and labourious life, has engrossed, by the mere force of natural genius, unaided by scholastic education, a far greater share of public notice than any man of past or present times. Lord North, whose estimate of mental power none will venture to dispute, described Cobbett as the greatest "political reasoner" he ever knew. He was so. It may, perhaps, fall to the lot of few to be so highly gifted, yet the same means for the cultivation of natural capacity are within the reach of those who are inclined to profit by them.

Various and opposite are the opinions which the public have entertained of the character of William Cobbett, in the following sketch of it, however, as taken from a close and accurate examination of his good and bad qualities, as they displayed themselves in the multifarious concerns in which he was engaged, and particularly as regards the rank which he held in the literary world, we shall fairly and dispassionately give him our approbation where it is due, but at the same time, we shall not avert our view from those dark and ugly spots which adhered

to him through life, and which formed the most repellent part of his character.

Viewing him abstractedly, William Cobbett was perhaps the greatest egotist that ever lived, and as every thing which he did and every sentence that he uttered was important in his own estimation, he became of course the constant theme of his voluminous writings. William Cobbett was the object towards which the thoughts of William Cobbett were continually directed, and hence his changes of opinion with respect to all subjects and all men. There is not, perhaps, a question which he has not by turns advocated and opposed, there is not a man, whom he has not by turns praised and vilified. But, says Mr. Hazlitt, people have about as substantial an idea of Cobbett, as they have of Cribb. His blows are hard, and he himself is as impenetrable. One has no notion of him as making use of a fine pen, but a great mutton fist; his style stuns his readers, and "he fillips the ear of the public with a thrée-man-beetle." He was too much for any single newspaper antagonist; he "laid waste" a city orator or member of parliament and bore hard upon the government itself. He was a kind of fourth estate in the politics of the country. He was not only unquestionably the most powerful political writer of his times, but one of the best writers in the language, marked however, with those defects of grammar, which in him were unpardonable, and which he was too opinionative to correct, when told of them. He thought and spoke plain, broad, downright English. He might be said to have had the clearness of Swift, the naturalness of Defoe, and the picturesque satirical description of Mandeville, if all such comparisons were not impertinent. A really great and original writer is like nobody but himself, and in one sense Sterne was not a wit, nor Shakespeare a poet. It is easy to describe second rate talents, because they fall into a class, and enlist under a standard, but first rate powers defy calculation or comparison, and can be defined only by themselves. They are *sui generis*, and make the class to which they belong.

Cobbett has been compared to Paine, and so far it is true, that there are no two writers who come more into juxtaposition from the nature of their subjects, from the internal resources on which they drew, and from the popular effect of their writings, and their adaptation (if we may be allowed that expression) to the capacity of every reader. Paine was a much more sententious writer than Cobbett. You cannot open a page in any of his best and earlier works without meeting with some maxim, some antithetical and memorable saying, which is a sort of starting place for the argument, and the goal to which it returns. There is not a single *bon mot*, a single sentence in Cobbett that has ever been quoted again. If any thing be ever quoted from him, it is an epithet of abuse, or a nickname. He was an excellent hand at invention in that way, and has "damnable iteration in him." What could be better than his pestering Erskine year after year with his second title of Baron Clackmannan? He was rather too fond of the *sons and daughters of corruption*. In this respect he was like Lord Brougham as a speaker, and Walter Scott as a writer, both had a stock of set phrases by which the speaker or the writer could always be discovered. Paine endeavoured to reduce things to first principles, to announce self-evident truths. Cobbett troubled himself about little, but the details and local circumstances. Paine appeared to have made up his mind before hand to certain opinions, and to try to find the most pointed and compendious expressions for them; Cobbett appeared to have no clue, no fixed or leading principles, nor ever to have thought on a question till he sat down to write upon it, but then there seemed to be no end of his matter of fact and raw materials, which were brought out in all their strength and sharpness, from not having been squared or fritted down or vamped up to suit a theory; he went on with his descriptions and illustrations as if he would never come to a stop; they had all the force of novelty with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance; his knowledge grew out of the subject, and his style was that of a man who has an absolute intention of what he is talking about, and never

thinks of any thing else. He dealt in premises, and spoke to evidence, the coming to a conclusion and summing up (which was Paine's forte) lay in a smaller compass. The one could not compose an elementary treatise on politics to become a manual for the popular reader, nor could the other in all probability have kept up a weekly journal for the same number of years with the same spirit, interest, and untired perseverance. Paine's writings are a sort of introduction to political arithmetic on a new plan; Cobbett kept a day book and made an entry at full of all the occurrences and the troublesome questions, that started up throughout the year. Cobbett with vast industry, vast information, and the utmost power of making what he says intelligible, never seemed to get at the beginning or come to the end of any question. Paine, in a few short sentences, seemed by his peremptory manner "to clear it from all controversy, past, present, and to come." Paine took a bird's eye view of things. Cobbett stuck close to them, inspected the component parts, and kept hold of the smallest advantages they afforded him; or if we might be here indulged in a pastoral allusion, Paine tried to enclose his ideas in a fold for security and repose: Cobbett let *his* pour out upon the plain, like a flock of sheep, to feed and batten. Cobbett was a pleasanter writer for those to read who did not agree with him, for he was less dogmatical, went more into the common grounds of fact and argument to which all appeal; was more desultory and various, and appeared less to be driving at a previous conclusion, than urged on by the force of present conviction. He was, therefore, tolerated by all parties, although by turns he made himself obnoxious to all, and even those whom he abused read him; the reformers read him when he was a tory, and the tories read him when he was a reformer.

If he exhibited himself less metaphysical and poetical than his celebrated prototype, he was more picturesque and dramatic. His episodes, which are numerous as they are pertinent, were striking, interesting, full of life and *naïveté*, minute, double measure running over, but never tedious. He was

one of those writers, who can never tire us, not even of himself, for there is something decidedly amusing even in his egotism. He did not talk of himself for want of something to write about, but because some circumstance that has happened to himself is the best possible illustration of the subject, and he was not the man to shrink from giving the best possible illustrations of the subject from a squeamish delicacy, in fact, he liked both himself and his subject too well. Mr. Cobbett was not a *make believe* writer; his worst enemy cannot say that of him. How fine were the graphical descriptions he sent us from America; what a transatlantic flavour; what a native *gusto*; what fine *sauce piquante* of contempt they were seasoned with! The groves of the Ohio that had just fallen beneath the axe's stroke live in his description, and the Swedish turnips that he transplanted from Botley "look green" in prose. What havoc he makes, when he pleases, of the curls of Dr. Parr's wig, and of the whig consistency of the ministers.

His grammar is a book, which no one but Cobbett could write, it blends instruction with amusement; in it he is too hard upon the style of others, and not enough on his own: he exposes the inaccuracies of others, and overlooks his own. As a political partizan, no one could stand against him. With his brandished club, like giant despair in Pilgrim's Progress, he knocked out their brains, and not only no individual, but no corrupt system could hold out against his powerful and repeated attacks, but with the same weapon, swung round like a flail, that he levelled his antagonists, he laid his friends low and put his own party *hors de combat*. This was a bad propensity, and a worse principle in political tactics, though by no means an uncommon one. If his blows were straight forward and steadily directed to the same object, no unpopular minister could live before him; instead of which, he laid about right and left, impartially and remorselessly, made a clear stage, had all the ring to himself, and then ran out of it, just when he should stand his ground. He threw his head into his adversary's stomach, and took away all inclination for

the fight; hit fair or foul, struck at every thing, and as you came up to his aid, or stood ready to pursue his advantage, he tripped up your heels or laid you sprawling, and pummelled you when down as much to his heart's content, as ever the Yangnesian carriers belaboured Rosinante with their pack staves. He paid off both scores of old friendship and new acquired enmity in a breath, in one perpetual volley, one raking fire of "arrowy sleet" shot from his pen. However his own reputation or the cause he espoused might suffer in consequence, he cared not a pin about that, so that he disabled all who opposed him, or who pretended to help him. In fact he could not bear success of any kind, not even of his own views and party, and if any principle were likely to become popular, he would turn round against it to shew his power in shouldering it on one side. In short, wherever power was, there was he against it, he naturally butted at all obstacles, as unicorns are attracted to oak trees, and felt his own strength only by resistance to the opinions and wishes of the rest of the world. To sail with the stream, to agree with the company, was not his humour. If he could have brought about a reform in parliament, the odds are, that he would instantly have fallen foul of and tried to mar his own handy work, and he quarrelled with his own creatures, as soon as he had written them into a little vogue and—a prison. This must not be ascribed to vanity or fickleness, so much as to a pugnacious disposition, that must have an antagonist power to contend with, and only finds itself at ease in systematic opposition. If it had not been for this, the high towers and rotten places of the world would have fallen before the battering ram of his hard-headed reasoning, but if he once found them tottering, he would apply his strength to prop them up, and disappoint the expectations of his followers. He could not agree to any thing established nor to set up any thing else in its stead. While it was established, he pressed hard upon it, because it pressed upon him, at least in imagination. Let it, however, crumble under his grasp, and the motive to resistance was gone. He then required

some other grievance against which to set his face. His principle was repulsion ; his nature contradiction : he was made up of mere antipathies, an Ishmaelite indeed without a fellow. / He was always playing at *hunt the slipper* in politics, turning round upon whomever was next him. The way to wean him from any opinion, and make him conceive an intolerable hatred against it, was to place somebody near him, who was perpetually dinning it in his ears. Whilst he resided in England, he did nothing but abuse the borough-mongers, and laugh at the whole system, when he was in America, he grew impatient of freedom and a republic. If he had staid there a little longer, he would have become a loyal and a loving subject of his majesty king Goerge IV. He lampooned the French revolution when it was hailed as the dawn of liberty by millions ; by the time it was brought into almost universal ill odour by some means or other, (partly no doubt by himself,) he had turned, with one or two or three others, a staunch Buonapartist. He was always of the militant not of the triumphant party ; so far he bore a gallant show of magnanimity, but his gallantry was hardly of the right stamp, it wanted principle, for though he was not servile nor mercenary, he was the victim of self-will. / He must pull down and pull in pieces ; it was not his disposition to do otherwise. This was to be deplored, for with his great talents, he might have done great things, if he would have gone right forward to any useful object, if he would have made thorough stitch-work of any question, or joined hand and heart with any principle. He changed his opinions, as he did his friends, and much on the same account. He had no comfort in fixed principles : as soon as any thing was settled in his own mind, he quarrelled with it. He had no satisfaction but in the chase after truth : he ran a question down, worried and killed it, then quitted it like vermin, and started some new game to lead him a new dance, and give him a fresh breathing through bog and brake, with the rabble yelping at his heels, and the leaders perpetually at fault. This to him was sport royal, he thought it as good as cudgel playing, or single stick, or any

thing else that had life in it. He liked the cut and thrust, the falls, bruises and dry blows of an argument, as to any good or useful results that might come of the amicable settling it, any one was welcome to them for him. The amusement was over, when the matter was once fairly decided.

There is another point of view in which this may be put. It might almost be said, relatively speaking, that Mr. Cobbett was a very honest man, with a total want of principle, and this direct paradox might be thus explained. It is thereby meant to infer that Mr. Cobbett was in downright earnest in what he said, or in the part he took at the time, but in taking that part, he was led entirely by headlong obstinacy, caprice, novelty, pique, or personal motive of some sort, and not by a steadfast regard for truth, or habitual anxiety for what was right uppermost in his mind. He was not a paid, time-serving, shuffling advocate, for no man could write as he did, who did not believe himself sincere, but his understanding was the dupe and slave of his momentary, violent, and irritable humours. He did not adopt an opinion deliberately or for money, yet his conscience was at the mercy of the first provocation he received, of the first whim he took in his head; he saw things through the medium of heat and passion, not with reference to any general principles, and his whole system of thinking was deranged by the first object that struck his fancy or soured his temper. One cause of this phenomenon was perhaps the want of a regular education. He was a self-taught man, and had the faults as well as the excellences of that class of persons in their most striking and glaring excess. It must be acknowledged that the editor of the Political Register was not the gentlemen and scholar, he never studied the punctilios necessary to constitute the former, and the latter he never wished to be considered, as his philippic against the learned languages will testify. He, however, possessed certain qualities which, with a little better management, would have been worth both those titles to the public. From a want of knowing what had been discovered before him, he had not certain general landmarks to refer to, or a

general standard of thought to apply to individual cases. He relied upon his own acuteness and the immediate evidence, without being acquainted with the comparative anatomy or philosophical structure of opinion. He did not view things on a large scale, or at the horizon, dim and airy enough perhaps, but as they affected him, close, palpable, and tangible. Whatever he found out was his own, and he only knew what he found out. He was in the constant hurry and fever of gestation; his brain teemed incessantly with some new project. Every new light was the birth of a new system, the dawn of a new world to him. He was continually outstripping and overreaching himself. The last opinion was the only true one. He was wiser to day, than he was yesterday. Why should he not have been wiser to-morrow than he was to day? Men of a learned education are not so sharpwitted, as clever men without it, but they know the balance of the human intellect better; if they be more stupid; they are more steady, and are less liable to be led astray by their own sagacity, and the overweening petulance and hard-earned, and late-acquired wisdom. They do not fall in love with every meretricious extravagance at first sight, or mistake an old battered hypothesis for a vestal, because they are new to the ways of this old world. They do not seize upon it as a prize, but are safe from gross imposition by being as wise and no wiser than those that went before them.

Paine said on one occasion, "What I have written, I have written," as rendering any further declaration of his principles unnecessary. Not so Mr. Cobbett. What he had written was no rule to him what he was to write. He learned something every day, and every week he took the field to maintain the opinions of the last six days against friend or foe. It is a matter of some doubt, whether this outrageous inconsistency, this headstrong fickleness, this understood want of all rule and method, did not enable him to go on with the spirit, vigour, and variety that he did. He was not pledged to repeat himself. Every new Register was a kind of new prospectus. He blessed himself on being free from all ties and

shackles on his understanding ; he had no mortgages on his brain ; his motives were free and unencumbered. If he had been put in trammels, he might have become a vile hack, like so many more. But he gave himself " ample scope and verge enough." He took both sides of a question, and maintained one as sturdily as the other. If nobody else could argue against him, he was a very good match for himself. He wrote better *in favour* of reform than any body else ; he used to write better *against it*. Wherever he was, there was the tug of war ; the weight of the argument, the strength of abuse. He was not like a man in danger of being bed-ridden in his faculties ; he tossed and tumbled about his unwieldy bulk, and when he was tired of LYING on one side, he relieved himself by turning on the other. His shifting his point of view from time to time not merely added variety and greater compass to his topics, but it gave a greater zest and liveliness to his manner of treating them. Mr. Cobbett took nothing for granted as what he had proved before ; he did not write a book of reference. His ideas are to be seen in their first concoction, fermenting and overflowing with the ebullitions of a lively conception. We look on at the actual process, and are put in immediate possession of the grounds and materials, on which he formed his sanguine, unsettled conclusions. He did not give us samples of reasoning, putting the whole solid mass, refuse and all, and this was one cause of the clearness and force of his writings. An argument did not stop to stagnate and muddle in his brain, but passed at once to its paper. Fresh theories gave him fresh courage. He was like a young and lusty bridegroom, that divorces a favourite speculation every morning, and marries a new one every night. He was not wedded to his notions—not he. He had not one Mrs. Cobbett amongst all his opinions. He made the most of the last thought that came in his way, seized fast hold of it, rumbled it about in all directions with rough strong hands, had his wicked will of it, took a surfeit, and threw it away. Mr. Cobbett changing his opinions for new ones was not so wonderful, but what was more remarkable

was his facility in forgetting his old ones. He did not pretend to consistency, for therein he disavowed all connexion with himself. The only time he ever grew romantic was in bringing over the relics of Mr. Thomas Paine with him from America, to go a progress with them through the disaffected districts. On his arrival in London with "the canonized bones," he made a speech to disclaim all participation in the political and theological sentiments of his late idol, and to place the whole stock of his admiration and enthusiasm towards him to the account of his financial speculations, and of his having predicted the fate of paper money. He had a very ill habit of prophecying, and though always deceived, still went on prophecying, but the art of prophecying did not suit Mr. Cobbett's style. He had an unfortunate knack of fixing names, and times, and places; thus, according to him, the reformed parliament was to meet in March 1818, it did not meet, and we heard no more of the matter. Whenever his predictions failed, he took no further notice of them, but applied him to make some new ones, like the country people, who turn to see what weather there is in the almanac for the next week, though it has been out in its reckoning every day of the last.

Mr. Cobbett was great in attack, not in defence; he could not fight an up-hill battle. He could not bear the least punishing. If any one turned upon him, which few people were inclined to do, he immediately turned tail. Like an overgrown school-boy, he was so used to have all his own way, that he could not submit to any thing like a competition or a struggle for the mastery; he must lay on the blows, and take none. He was a bully, and a coward, a kind of big-ben in politics, who would fall upon others and crush them by his weight, but was not prepared for resistance, and was soon staggered by a few smart blows. Whenever he has been fairly and boldly set upon, he has slunk out of the controversy, and in no instance was this more apparent than in the controversy which he courted, on his hypothesis of the inutility of the dead languages. He found he had some able

and sturdy combatants to deal with, with whom he was competent to fight, and although he promised that in a certain Register, he would discomfit all his opponents, he considered it more prudent to let the matter drop, and his promise to his dying day remained unfulfilled. Some years ago, the Edinburgh Review made a dead set at him, to which he only retorted by an eulogy on the superior neatness of an English kitchen garden to a Scotch one. We remember going one day into a bookseller's shop in Fleet-street to ask for the number of the Edinburgh Review, and on our expressing our opinion to a young Scotchman, who stood behind the counter, that Mr. Cobbett might hit as hard in his reply, the north Briton said with some alarm, "But you don't think, sir, Mr. Cobbett will be able to injure the Scottish nation?" We said, we could not answer to that point, but we thought he was very well able to defend himself. He, however, did not, but ever after bore an implacable grudge against the Edinburgh Review.

Nitor in adversum, said the Times newspaper, should have been the motto of William Cobbett, but the sentence might have been rendered more complete.

—————"Nec me qui cætera vincit
Impetus."

The fact of his struggle against adversity remained undecided, but the journalist forgot to add, that circumstances, which would have crushed others, left the mind of Cobbett unsubdued.

It must, however, be observed, that birth, station, employment, ignorance, temper, character in early life, were all against him. But he emerged from all, and overcame all. By masculine force of genius, and the lever of a proud, confident, and determined *will*, he pushed aside a mass of obstacles, of which the least and slightest would have repelled the boldest or most ambitious of ordinary men. He ended by bursting that formidable barrier which separates the class

of English gentlemen from all beneath them, and died a member of parliament, representing a large constituency which had chosen him twice.

In this *will*, in this determination not to be borne down, this love of living in an element of opposition, this finding in every new misfortune a spring of fresh and flowing energy, the secret is solved, that preserved to Cobbett a certain share of greatness, in spite of changes and tergiversations of principle, and in the face of the inconsistencies and whimsicalities of his human nature. Thus Cobbett died unquestionably a great man, by some regretted, by many respected, and by all known. But he might have died a much greater man, by *more* regretted, and respected as *much* as known. Had Cobbett died a young man in the fullness of his early fame, the Newark motto would justly have graced his tombstone. "*Perissam ni perissam*. His after existence has proved the truth of this. He has perished by not perishing before; not his name, but the unmixed glory, that we should have attached to it; not his reputation, which must be lasting, but the value and lustre that it would have gathered from the consistency, that would have kept it bright. However a hundred great men have illustrated the same principle, and none more than Napoleon, in living after Waterloo.

The writings of Cobbett will cause him to stand out to the future historian of his country, as infinitely the most remarkable public man upon the canvass of events, among which he moved, during forty-three years of startling vicissitude and changing fate. In all the annals of public proceedings in peace or war of this period, it will be impossible to disconnect him from the picture. Although a Proteus in changes of opinion, although presenting himself here and there in altered guise, his position metamorphosed, and his ground removed, he is still present, and present in the foreground too, and although great and honourable, and distinguished men will be grouped and gathered in the same immortal painting, the figure of William Cobbett will yet be conspicuously

observed. He will not be one of any depicted party, but he will be there, like the skeleton at the Egyptian feast, to remind all parties of his presence.

That the efforts of his genius were, during the last twenty-five years, too generally directed to evil purposes, we must be the last to dispute; but we deny that this misdirection is any impeachment of the eternal and universal truth of the proposition, that without moral, there can be no intellectual grandeur. In our imperfect nature all is mixed, good and evil, and we cannot expect in man those qualities which we must love and admire, without their associate defects of corresponding magnitude. Men of limited powers may be, and commonly are also men of limited defect, but beside the natural tendency of all power to abuse, the constitution of mind, from which extraordinary vigour arises, has an original tendency to error. Great energy is ever more or less connected with a more or less impetuous violence, and the tendency of the imaginative faculty to seduce men into moral extravagance, and often into practical extravagance of conduct, is a thread-bare common-place.

Of these unhappy failings of our mixed nature, Mr. Cobbett's history affords a remarkable example. Gifted with the most extraordinary powers of intellect, and the clearest original views of what is right and profitable to mankind, instinctively imbued too with generous and manly sympathies, more than half of his life was engaged in a course of, at least questionable hostility to the institutions of his country, and in a bitter warfare with all around, of all parties, about which there cannot be any dispute. There was much in the early part of Mr. Cobbett's life, and the state of society in our age to account for, and therefore to excuse this seeming paradox. Born a peasant in the day of wealth-idolatry, uneducated and plain in his tastes and attainments, amongst a people of much fallacious and artificial refinement, the son of the Farnham cottager would originally feel his own intellectual superiority a perpetual prompter to despise the system in which he moved. Through life, a laborious man, uncharged with

any expensive tastes or passions, and struggling to the close in very narrow circumstances, he would find new reason in his own experience to condemn a state of society that awarded as chance should direct, or suppleness, the very brand of inferior intellect, should lead the golden prizes of affluence and attendant consideration, that ought to be the meed of genius and industry.

The pride of purse persecuted him in America, and persecuted him no less in England, as it persecutes us all, and will continue to persecute, until in the fulness of its cup, it shall be laid low. The purse-proud Americans were a democracy, and therefore in America, Mr. Cobbett was a royalist; the purse-proud English were an aristocracy, and therefore in England, Mr. Cobbett was a democrat. It must also be taken into consideration, that in England the vice is impartially distributed amongst all classes of the wealthy, and therefore in England, Mr. Cobbett's resentment took a more definite, perhaps a more just direction, associating him successively with whatever party most unequivocally prosecuted the war against wealth. This we believe to be the solution of whatever seems inconsistent in the career of Mr. Cobbett.

In his early education too, and in the circumstances of his after life will be found enough to explain the temper, as they explain the direction of his political course. There is, undoubtedly, a discipline which strengthens the genius, while it polishes the manners, but this is a reasoning discipline, it is a regimen, which from childhood teaches to control our passions and dispositions, not under the influence of fear, but from a sense of what is virtuous and becoming. Men trained in this discipline acquire an art of self-government, which qualifies them to exercise any power that they may possess over others, with a gentleness and consideration for human weakness, which no teacher but the early liberalized self-love can impart. There is, however, a discipline of another kind, which often breaks, though not always, intellectual power, but which is sure to unfit him, who has been subject to it, for the exercise of any power; this is a discipline of

force. To this last discipline, Mr. Cobbett was unfortunately subjected during that whole period in which the formation of character is completed. There is no reasoning in the obedience of the farm yard ; there is no reasoning in the discipline of the barrack, and up to his thirtieth year, Mr. Cobbett suffered one or other of these forms of slavery. The very same cause which renders the harshly-reared orphan, a domestic tyrant ; the foremast-man or the late private, a despotic officer ; the military man of any class, a functionary almost too severe for civil life ; the emancipated slave, the cruellest of slave-drivers ; this same cause would naturally give to the polemics of a powerful disputant, all the intolerant asperity with which Mr. Cobbett's writings have been charged.

Cobbett all along his chequered career, has performed a great mixture of good and evil. In his *nature*, the good certainly predominated ; in his *actions*, take them all in all, we fear the mischief had the greatest share. His mind had a strong and sound formation, but its faculties got diseased in the development. This was the result of its want of right education ; he had managed it himself from what he learned from nature, he could not control it by the philosophy that is to be gathered out of books. He could not kindle it into a useful admiration of the lore of others, he only taught it to exult in its knowledge. It had no subduing power, no holy and glorious love of and wonder at the wisdom of ages, to humble its presumptions with a pure and wholesome humility. It knew of—it mingled with the **PRESENT**, but could neither be guided nor governed by the morals of the **PAST**. It was full of knowledge without learning, and therefore of spirit without control.

The career of Cobbett as a writer, the only character in which he will be recognized, for as an active politician, or as a member of parliament, he was nothing, began in America, marked by all the peculiarities of style, which have since rendered it every where recognizable. He adopted the same means of argument, the same homely illustrations, the same *lucidus ordo* and striking marshalling of arranged facts ; the

same battering ram system of assault; the characteristic nickname founded on some known event; the coarse and vulgar abuse, the scurrilous personality, and the pervading vengeance of hatred, which overcoming all other changes of his mind and opinions, have maintained themselves in their pristine vigour, *ab ovo usque ad mala*, from his first Porcupine down to his last Register. But the early energies of this school of composition were began in a better atmosphere than that of misty confusion, which hung over his later efforts.

The first and general characteristic of his style is perspicuity, unequalled and inimitable. A second is homely masculine vigour. A third is purity, always simple and raciness, often elegant. His argument is an example of acute, yet apparently natural, nay, involuntary logic, smoothed in its progress and cemented in its parts by a mingled stream of torturing sarcasm, contemptuous jocularly, and fierce and slaughtering invective. His faults are coarseness, brutality, and tedious repetition. It must be added, that the matter of this most forcible of writers rarely shows much inventive faculty, though his active and observing mind supplied abundance of illustration to his argument, and when he happens to present an original view of any subject, it is always more eccentric and ingenious than just.

Cobbett was in the beginning imbued with the purest principles of political virtue. He wrote as a patriot, because out of his country, in a land where his country was hated and reviled, and where the bitterness of enmity was fresh against him; in a land where it was dangerous to be an Englishman, he supported his advocacy of England; he affirmed his loyalty to England's king; and he upheld his opinions in favour of English monarchical institutions against republicanism, against jacobinism in the heart of America and in the face of France. There was a moral courage in this which did him honour, a courage which he preserved in many other instances of his life. He likewise did great service to his country; in his efforts for her good, he was something in the position of Marcus Curtius in the chasm at Rome; America

was a similar gulph of peril into which he had fairly plunged, only that fate did not require that it should close over his head.

The twelve volumes of pamphlets and lives and papers and essays, which he published separately there, and afterwards collected in this country, were preceded by a subscription list, at the head of which stood the name of the king, followed by a long retinue of his nobility, including many of his ministers, and winding up with a loyal muster roll of attached subjects, lovers and defenders of the English constitution. Which of Cobbett's late productions could have been graced with such an appendix; a tribute as loud and lofty as the genius, which it was meant to crown.

In England Cobbett continued in the same path, and let it always be remembered that upon that path he had educated himself. The atmosphere of Harrow had not instilled—the influences of Oxford had not confirmed him in the principles which he had chosen to adopt. He had brought himself up to them, and the fact of his having first imbibed them in the army cannot be adduced as the reason which begat his choice, since the commander who encouraged him to education, and promoted him as its reward, nay, who afterwards procured him his discharge, that he might more freely exercise it, was the unhappy Lord Edward Fitzgerald, whom no one will certainly accuse of too strong an attachment to the love of order, or the creed of conservatism.

No, William Cobbett, with a mind that scorned to mould itself to opinions by any modern examples, and yet was utterly without the benefit of any ancient lore, thought for himself and by himself, gazed into the amphitheatre of events, drew his inference with a clear head and steady heart, reasoned with discretion, and finally decided with judgment, that the wisest and purest of governments was a limited monarchy, and the most virtuous and prudent course of politics for all men to adopt, was that which prescribed the union of church and state, loyalty to the monarch, and attachment to the constitution and altars of the land.

Cobbett had educated himself to this belief, and up to a time, in the same creed he lived and wrote and triumphed. And we may remark that he must have deemed it, at bottom, pure, for naturally he was a hater of corruption, and he never wrote for gold. We think we may fairly exculpate Cobbett from this charge; he has eloquently defended himself against it, although such defence was not always to be relied upon, for what he defended one day he would attack the next, especially if in the mean time some one had placed himself in the way, whom he regarded as an intruder. No doubt, he had raised his writings into a national importance, no doubt, ministers ought to have thanked him for his services, but in one instance, namely, that of Pitt, when by his energetic pen he had upheld the ruinous system adopted by that minister, and actually governed the public mind in forming their opinion of it, then did that haughty and arrogant tory refuse to sit at the same table with the individual, with that individual to whom he was chiefly indebted for the retention of his office. Of some of the ministers he accepted the thanks, but rejected their overtures. He was asked if government could be of any service to any branch of his family, and he replied, that if by his own industry, he could assist his family, he would; but that he would not accept of any thing for them from any other source.

At this time Cobbett must have worked upon principle, and for the sake of principle, and because he believed his principle good, above all danger, and beyond all price. He came to England, and he continued so to work. He published in defence of the constitution, and virulently opposed the new inroads that were then advocated warmly without the senate, and occasionally earnestly recommended within. Above all, how did he come forward in the cause of his country upon the subject of her threatened invasion by a man whom he much resembled, Napoleon Buonaparte. His remarks were cherished as the germes of a patriot's virtue, which ministers deemed it well to scatter over the land as seeds that must produce noble fruit. They were read from

every pulpit of every protestant church in Great Britain, they were adverted to in the senate by one of its best and chiefest ornaments, as entitling their author to have raised to his memory a statue of gold. They were praised by many Englishmen as superior to Burke, and Müller, the Swiss historian, pronounced them equal to Demosthenes.

Was not this honour? was not this fame? the national gratitude was now as a pedestal upon which William Cobbett stood. A noble basement! which a man should either erect into a column, or to be content to rest. Cobbett, however, descended, and took his station upon other ground.

La Bruyère says, "*L'on ne peut aller loin dans l'amitié, si l'on n'est pas disposé à se pardonner, les uns aux autres, les petits défauts.*" Cobbett, if he ever read, knew not how to practice this maxim of La Bruyère, he forgave nobody his little faults, when those faults operated against himself. He was now in the zenith of glory, he might soon have become a member of parliament, and he would not have been long a member without becoming a minister; his path was open, and he had only to tread it steadily to arrive at ambition's goal. But this was not his doom. Windham asked him to dine with him, and invited Pitt: the supercilious statesman refused to meet the low-born but renowned writer, who had done such service to the state. Cobbett was stung to the quick: stung into hatred beyond forgiveness. In this instance he would have broken his neck over the maxim of La Bruyère, rather than not have proved its truth. His passion had got the mastery over him, and when Cobbett imbibed hatred, he became its victim. Because Pitt had offended him, he veered round to an absolute radicalism, he did so gradually, but effectively. He was a conservative upon principle, but his vindictive spirit made him a radical out of hate. This tergiverse shifting of his opinions from a private pique, throws rather a gloomy shade upon Cobbett's character; it proves that his passions were stronger than his principles, and a thousand subsequent actions of his life prove the same thing. The point, however, is unfavourable

to himself ; it tells nothing to his credit, and it told nothing in his fortunes, but it has left a powerful moral lesson to society. There can be no doubt that William Cobbett in his heart repented the change. In his heart he was a conservative up to his dying day ; he was only a radical from necessity, from the influence of his passions ; he could not be a whig, that was impossible, and he felt that he could not be a tory, because birth, pride, and purse-pride had begun to persecute him, and to whatever persecuted him, his fierce and unrelenting vindictiveness forbade him to belong. He was aristocratic by nature, but he could not dwell amongst those from whom he had not sprung, and after his politics began to make him poor, he proudly knew that with whom he could not cope, he could not associate. He had placed an insuperable barrier between himself and his former principles, against which it would have been vain to struggle, and therefore he abandoned them gradually, and commenced fighting for a cause with which he held no common sympathies, until he had written himself into a belief that it was a just cause ; just as men who have invented a particular story *à la Munchausen*, for the entertainment of their friends, habituate themselves in the telling of it, till they believe it is true.

The prevailing crime of Cobbett's life, for it amounted almost to a crime, was this falling off from mere personal motives from his former friends. He knew men first for a little time to love them ; they offended him, and he knew them all the rest of his life to hate them, and to be revenged upon them. Personal affronts always went far with Cobbett, who acted generally upon impulse. His inconsistencies may be in most instances traced to some offence, real or imagined, which he received from those who once had been the objects of his praise. Burdett, once in his opinion the saviour of England, was transformed into Burdett the type of all that is mean and base. Waithman, the pride of the senate, became Waithman, the empty shop-boy. Hunt, the patriot, degenerated to Hunt, the greatest of liars. O'Connell, the glory of Ireland, was at one time a vile vagabond. We are

sorry to say that kindness to him did not call forth a return as surely as did insult or neglect. There was, indeed, a harshness and cruelty about Cobbett, which it was impossible to excuse. For an enemy he had no bowels of compassion.

The Marquess of Londonderry fell by a calamity to which all men may be subject. In a moment of unwatched madness, he died by his own hand, and ever after was he designated in the Register as "Castlereagh who cut his throat at North Cray," or by way of an alliteration, it used to be, "the carotid artery cutting Castlereagh." Even an individual of lower importance, a staunch adherent of O'Connell's, who was shot in a duel provoked by his own impertinence, was insulted, while yet unburied, in terms of the grossest contempt and ribaldry, for no greater crime than because in a quarrel respecting the money to be paid by Roman Catholic emancipation got up between Cobbett and O'Connell, Bric on the principle of adhering to the individual to whom he was indebted for many services, had supported the latter. These are cruel things, unworthy of the noble and generous mind; fifty other instances, however, might be adduced. The merciless abuse of Lord Picknose Liverpool, and subsequently to that of Mr. Justice Taunton, immediately after his death; the everlasting vilification which he heaped upon Mr. Scarlett, and upon every judge who had presided on the bench during any of the numerous trials to which he was exposed, are all fresh in the memory of every reader of his Register. When Canning died, he wrote over him a funeral oration of withering intensity of censure, but this, though in some parts harsh, and in no part kindly timed, we are not inclined to blame.

The Edinburgh Review, however, once gave a far more slashing exposition of Cobbett on this head, and there can be no doubt that he deserved it. It was done in a critical survey of his articles in his Register, at the time he was advocating the principles of Sir Francis Burdett, whom he had so often denounced as a traitor, and whom, since his

friendship with him, he had taken especial pains to abuse. The difference was, that Cobbett's first abuse of Burdett, was the abuse of tory for going too far, and his second, that of a radical for not going far enough. The extreme talent and power of Cobbett made his political opinions readable, but his extreme tergiversation and inconsistency, and above all his sickening egotism, rendered them almost valueless. Yet his common sense often thrust him into truth, as it were in despite of himself, and the nature of his illustrations continually commanded conviction which he taught his readers to misapply, and thus we might gather from his tory writings, wherewith to form a radical creed, and glean from his liberal lucubrations a fit superstructure for a conservative code of laws.

In his works of politics, however, and all Cobbett's books were books of politics, he had one great moral and virtuous aim in view, an aim, which if he did not keep independent of his dislikes, he ever employed his dislikes to serve, and never reversed the subserviency. This was the promulgation of agriculture, and the bettering of the condition of the agricultural labourers. In order to bring about this purpose, he stuck at nothing, he tried all sorts and modes of experiments. Now he endeavoured to educate the labourers, and now he railed against all education ; his own children, had not what may be properly termed been educated, and from them he drew the standard of others, not taking into the account the great and manifold advantages, which they possessed in such a man as their father. At one time he abused the farmers for not paying their men, and now he recommended the old system of keeping them without pay ; now he exhorted them to order and allegiance, and now he lectured them all but to strike for wages. In early life his enemies railed against him for keeping back liberal opinions amongst them, and in his latter days they prosecuted him for exciting them to sedition. But right or wrong, by this means or that, he was always battling for them and for what he believed to be their welfare.

In fact, it was this attachment of Cobbett to the soil and

to the tillers of the soil from whom he sprang, that stamped him so effectually with the character of Englishman. His writings on domestic subjects, independently of politics, proved that he was English in heart and soul. A contemporary writer infers from the same source, that he was a genuine descendant of the old Saxon stock, in short "the last of the Saxons." Marked indeed must have been the character which in these days could give rise to such an opinion.

In literature Cobbett acquired a far wider fame, than he was in any way entitled to. He had no mercy upon bad grammarians, and he compiled a decent grammar with a fair explanation of the subjunctive mood, but for the sake of appearing what he really was, quite English, he adopted homely modes of expression, and in the use of vulgar idioms, and the accepted vulgarities of conversation among the classes to whom he addressed himself, he defied all the rules of grammar himself with a desperate impunity, that was only to pass harmless, because it was impossible that men could imitate his excellencies, and therefore unlikely that they would adopt his faults. He fancied or pretended to fancy that he was indebted for his vigour and lucidness to his grammatical knowledge of the language, and was fond of referring to his grammar as a proof of his profound information. If he really entertained such an opinion, it was a great mistake. His grammars do not contain one grammatical principle of the slightest value beyond what we find in a sixpenny abridgement of Lindley Murray. Of the philosophy of language he had no idea, no acquaintance with etymology, not a philological notion in his head. He pulled the king's speeches to pieces in a very amusing manner, subjecting them to a species of verbal torture, which no writing and least of all his own could bear.

Though continually writing politics, and sometimes committing what he called history, the stock of knowledge which he brought to historical disquisitions was singularly small. A more amusing instance of this cannot be found in the whole range of literature than his History of the Reformation. In this attempt Cobbett proceeded with a fearlessness which

is the usual concomitant of an intrepid ignorance. Fearless indeed must have been the ignorance which declared Luther, Calvin, and Beza to be the greatest ruffians that ever disgraced the annals of the world, and condemned their labours to contempt and derision, without, we need hardly say, having read one line of their works. There is a stain attached to the conduct of Cobbett in regard to these aspersions, which he threw out against the three great reformers, which remains to this day "unwashed, unannealed." It was fully believed that he had received or was promised a certain sum by the popish party in Ireland to espouse their cause, and hence his journey to Ireland, where he lectured to the people on all his favourite topics, and particularly referring them to his History of the Reformation, as a proof that he did not exactly consider it a reformation; had he been lecturing, however, to any other than papists, it would have been the best of all possible reformations. In "the history," however, we find that Cranmer is a scoundrel, without a particle of redemption, Latimer a blackguard, the burning of whom was a most meritorious act. Cromwell a robbing blacksmith, and so forth. Of course Henry VIII. cuts a great figure in this history, and whatever could be objected to the character of that burly monarch is put in the fullest light. As old bluff Harry had many vulnerable points, it must be expected that so great a master of the Billingsgate as Cobbett, has succeeded in making a magnificent picture of that "rotten lump of beastliness." In delineating him, he had George IV. in his eye, and many hits directed apparently against Henry's corulience, profusion, favouritism, and ill-usage of his wives, have a secondary aim against the character of George. Edward VI. is treated as a sickly, and diseased boy, with a predisposition to cruelty. Against Elizabeth the full vials of his wrath are emptied. Here, indeed, Sheridan's caution, that there should be no scandal against queen Elizabeth, is woefully neglected. Every slander that was ever said or hinted against "the fair vestal throned in the west," is to be found in this accurate and impartial History of the Protestant

Reformation. Her mother, Anne Boleyn, is equally ill-used, Cobbett going so far as to pretend to believe the story of some lying popish ecclesiastics, that she was the daughter of Henry VIII. and with the usual harshness of his manner, justifying the horrors of her trial and execution. So accurate in examination is this book, that he attributes the rack and the loss of Calais to Elizabeth (Lingard, impartial author! is his authority for the first of these discoveries,) and scruples not to assert, that the persons, who suffered in Mary's time suffered for felony and treason, not for heresy. He speaks rather tenderly of Bonner, who is held up as a miracle of gentleness, as compared with Lord Sidmouth. Philip obtains no small praise, especially because he brought a large treasure to this country when he married Mary. Leopold of Saxe Coburg is a very different kind of personage, he not having brought a farthing, but obtained £50,000 a year when he espoused the Princess Charlotte, and it may be added that although the said Princess Charlotte is dead, he still, although seated on the throne of a foreign country, extracts the same enormous sum from the people of this country, on the plea, that he was over-burdened with debt, which debt, like the national debt, will never be extinguished, so long as the people of this country will consent to pay the annuity.

In "the history," the massacre of Bartholomew is rather eulogized, and Coligni of course set down as a scoundrel, only worthy of being cut off. The number of people slain in that massacre, he fixes at the precise number of seven hundred and eighty-six. He, nevertheless, has occasionally a mis-giving that, on the whole, St. Barthelemi reflects but dubious credit on the cause of his clients, and takes care to say that, however necessary and justifiable in a political point of view, the then existing state of France being considered, it was not exactly in accordance with the generally mild and humane spirit of catholicism. Of the approbation of the pope, and the joy diffused over all the Romish communities in Europe, Cobbett knew nothing. In fact, we have never read a more amusing specimen of the hardihood of total ignorance than

the discussion on St. Bartholomew, in his History of the Reformation.

The outrages of the inquisition, the barbarities of Bonner; the treacherous massacres directed by Charles IX; the exterminating decrees and bulls of the popes; the sanguinary oppression of the Spaniards in the Netherlands; the corruption, tyranny, avarice and rapacity of the Romish church in the sixteenth century; its reluctance to the progress of learning, and its ceaseless attempts to perpetuate by cruelty or fraud, by falsehood or blood, its sway over mankind: of all this Cobbett says nothing. But when Elizabeth sends to the gallows those, who avowedly were engaged in ceaseless plots against her own life; who were endeavouring to bind the country to a foreign yoke, whose sole thought was how to put back the human mind a couple of centuries, that their "order" might regain its lost supremacy, then the pathetic soul of Cobbett is awakened into sorrow and indignation. Nothing can be finer than his account of the gunpowder plot and the revolution. Oliver Cromwell rather puzzles him. He is obliged to blame him for his cruelties to the amiable men of 1641, reeking with the blood of the most dismal massacre on record, but still the iron-souled protector finds some strings in the heart of his unwilling vituperator to vibrate in unison with his own, and he is not cursed altogether.

Considered as a history, the book is actually droll. Cobbett had never read a single line beyond the most ordinary sources; never qualified himself for his task by any study of contemporary authors, or any researches into theology or polemics.

Cobbett never read much; he was thirty-five years before he read a word of Shakespeare, and then formed a very low opinion of him. Milton he treated with the greatest disdain; Sir Walter Scott was especially an eyesore. Byron he contemned, and of Wordsworth and Southey he knew nothing beyond the facts, that one was a stamp-master and the other a laureat. Of the ordinary run of literary labourers he never

took the slightest notice; one author alone was worth them all, and that was—William Cobbett.

In his domestic character, Cobbett appears to have been an estimable man, he was a good father by the acknowledgement of his children, the best of all tests. He was strong of heart in the domestic affections; he loved his wife, he loved his children, he loved what he would have called "the people" about him. In his family he was for peace, he only once, he declares spoke with harshness to a single member of it, but *sævit amor ferri*, the love of opposition or rather of opposing out of it reigned predominant.

In concluding the history of this remarkable man, we cannot refrain from passing our most unqualified censure of the manner in which some of his political opponents spoke of him when dead. The cold-blooded manner in which the press of this country attacked his reputation and depreciated his merits, while yet his warm remains were scarcely smoothed from the struggles of death, would be a disgrace to a nation of barbarians. The ferocity, the malignity of "The Times" appears to have been scarcely satiated with the death of an opponent, and the observations, the deep and withering invective which sullied the pages of that paper, will ever remain a stain upon the reputation of its proprietor. To the candid and liberal mind, smarting even under a personal injury, death generally softens all asperities, but where the enmity was merely of a political nature, it ill became those enemies to insult the memory of the dead, and coward-like to triumph over an adversary, who was laid low, who had fought the battle nobly with them, but who now could no longer harm them. A Washington once said of a political opponent just deceased, "Now all animosity ceases, and I will speak of the dead as of a human being, not as of a politician; I will now eulogize his virtues, and in the remembrance of them I will forget our difference of opinion." Would that the sentiments of Washington had been perpetuated in the minds of the opponents of Cobbett, and that they had not disgraced the English name and character in the vilification

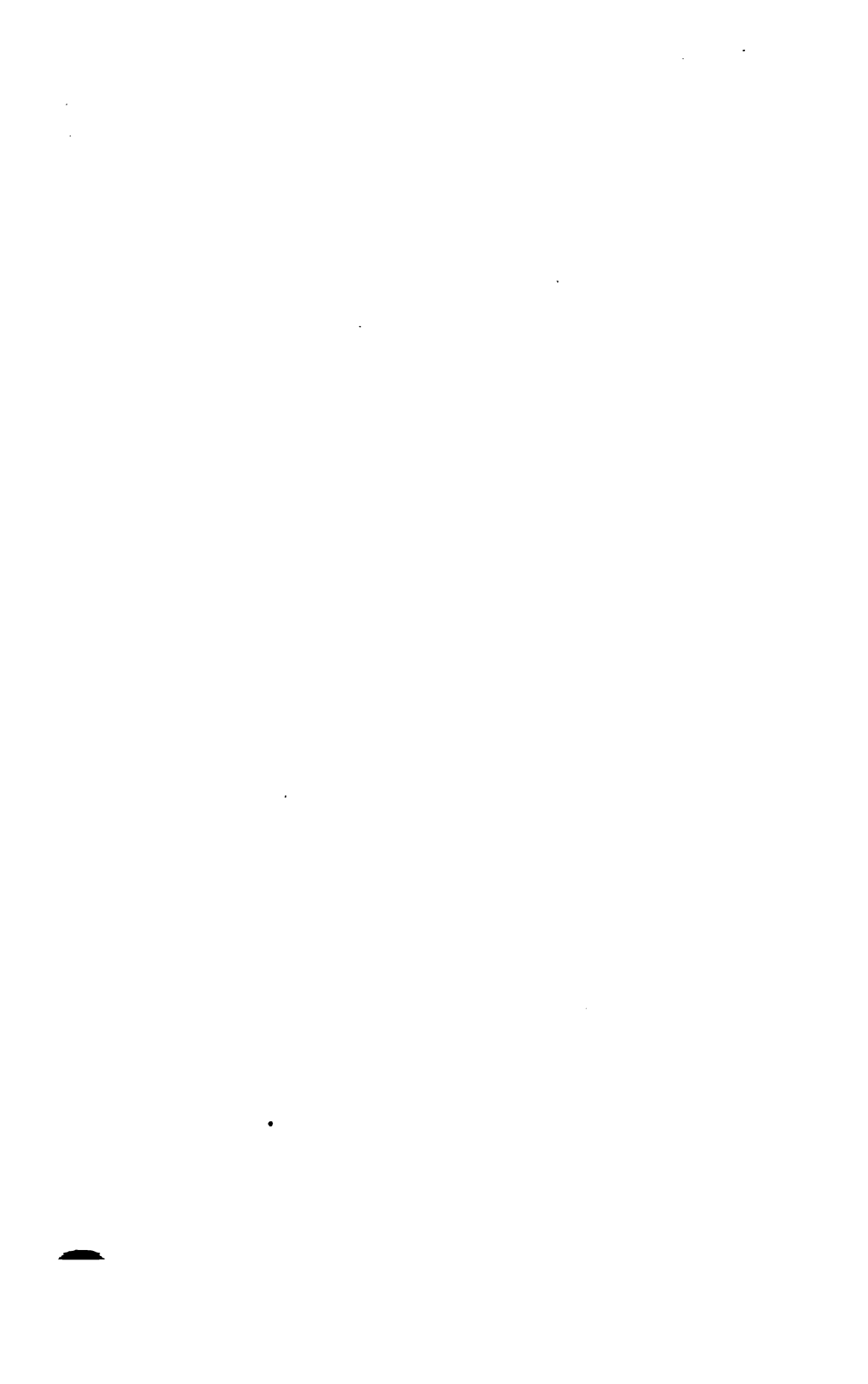
of an individual whom death had deprived of the power of defending himself.

The grave has closed over Cobbett, but he has taken possession of that place which the secret pride and the nationality of all Englishman have long since tacitly accorded him. His monument must be found in his works. We cannot close this work more appropriately than with the transcription of a few stanzas, from a poem written by the author of the Corn Rhimes.

Oh ! bear him where the rain can fall,
 And where the winds can blow,
 And let the sun weep o'er his pall
 As to the grave ye go,
 And in some little lone church-yard
 Beside the growing corn,
 Let gentle nature's *stern prose bard*,
 Her mightiest peasant born,
 Yes, let the wild flowers wed his grave
 That bees may murmur near,
 When o'er his last home bend the brave,
 And say a MAN lies here.
 For Britons honour Cobbett's name,
 Though rashly oft he spoke,
 And none can scorn and few will blame
 The low laid heart of oak.
 Dead oak, thou livest ! Thy smitten hands,
 The thunder of thy brow,
 Speak with strong tongues in many lands,
 And tyrants hear the now.

THE END.





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